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THE UNIVERSITY FILM MAGAZINE

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THE potentials of the foreign film market in this country need fully examining.

One shortcoming is that many good continental films are withheld from, or delayed showings in our cinemas because some foreign film producers have misapprehensions as to the money-making capacities of their films when shown in Britain.

Hence, apart from any attitudes adopted by major circuit distributors etc., one of the chief reasons for the neglect of foreign films in this country appears to lie with producers who demand too high an initial payment from their British distributors, hoping in this way to recoup some of the capital expended in production

Quite understandably on their part, the distributors are wary of paying a set price for what may turn out to be a box-office failure and loss to them.

Under the system of initial payment nobody wins. Neither the distributor nor producer is achieving the best results, and nobody — including the film-interested public — can be fully satisfied.

It would be much fairer for distributors to pay producers a percentage of any profits made, rather than a down-payment, and thus avoid the initial gamble. In the long run this would almost certainly mean an increase in profits for the makers, and would not destroy any incentive the distributor may have to sell his product.

Moreover, many of the foreign films screened at the National Film Theatre are specially subtitled for their South Bank showing, yet are never released commercially in Britain. This also applies to some of the films shown at film festivals. In such cases the not inexpensive costs of adding sub-titles (in the region of from £200 to £400) and presentations are usually borne by the makers.

If the percentage basis were adopted, it would be possible for the producers of such product to at least regain part of their costs by a commercial showing as well. As it is, the prints seem to be shipped straight back to their country of origin.

Any money recouped by a commercial showing is better than none at all.

Doubtless it would be uneconomical to show some foreign films in this country, but there is no doubt that great improvements could be made in the present system.

We detect signs that in his attitude towards the continental, the Englishman is becoming less conservative. Given the opportunity, the foreign film could enjoy a substantial increase of popularity in this country.

AS A POSTSCRIPT we are wondering what has happened to some of the following films:—

"Jalsaghar" (Moscow Film Festival, 1959), "Bad Boys" (London Film Festival, 1960), Bunuel's "The Young One" with Zachary Scott (Cannes, 1960 — and surely commercial?), Bunuel's "Nazerin", "El Cechec to" (Venice, 1960), "Flight" (an American film shown at Edinburgh last year), Jugoslavia's powerful and quite shattering "The Ninth Circle" (Pala Film Festival, 1960; Cannes, 1960; Cork, 1961) and Clouzot's "La Verité".

And what are United Artists' plans for "Studs Lonigan" (on their shelves for a year) and Antonioni's "La Notte"?

AN INNOVATION in cinema-going, a "fright-break", has been widely advertised for "Homicidal". Before the last ten minutes, those who have had enough can retire, while the remainder stay to suffer the dénouement. We'd prefer the kind of "fright-break" that would come after the first ten minutes, so that those sufficiently aghast at that stage of the film could retire to the foyer and get a refund.

STRICTLY SPEAKING, as a film magazine, it is outside our province to comment on "Contrast", the new television magazine, except insofar that it is published by the British Film Institute.

To be honest, we were pleasantly surprised. Judging by the advertised list of contents we expected the first issue to be less interesting than it turned out to be, and we know from our own experience it is unfair to criticise a magazine on the strength of its first few issues. Like its stable-mate, "Sight and Sound", it too goes in for a glossy layout at the expense of copy, but unlike "S & S" this doesn't seem to disguise any actual deficiency of copy.

But whether, as its editor asks, it will supply a "want" as well as a "need", we doubt. We have a distinction here with the cinema, which right from its earliest years has thrown up enthusiastic magazines by its devotees. It is perhaps significant that television has to rely on a heavily subsidised magazine rather than on the spontaneous efforts of enthusiasts, and that the only previous attempt at a serious television magazine failed a couple of years ago.

We are aware that the finances of "Contrast" are taken care of outside of the BFI, but even so we cannot see what business the Institute, always complaining of short-staffing, has in frittering its energies on television. We notice that the Editorial Board of "Contrast" is almost the same as "S & S"'s. We should have thought their time would have been better spent in trying to salvage the rapidly deteriorating reputation of "Sight and Sound" rather than in dissipating their efforts on a medium which, when all is said and done, has only occasional points of contact with the cinema.

THINGS TO COME: See announcements on pages 12, 22 and 29.

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An examination of the method and aims of film Censorship in Britain

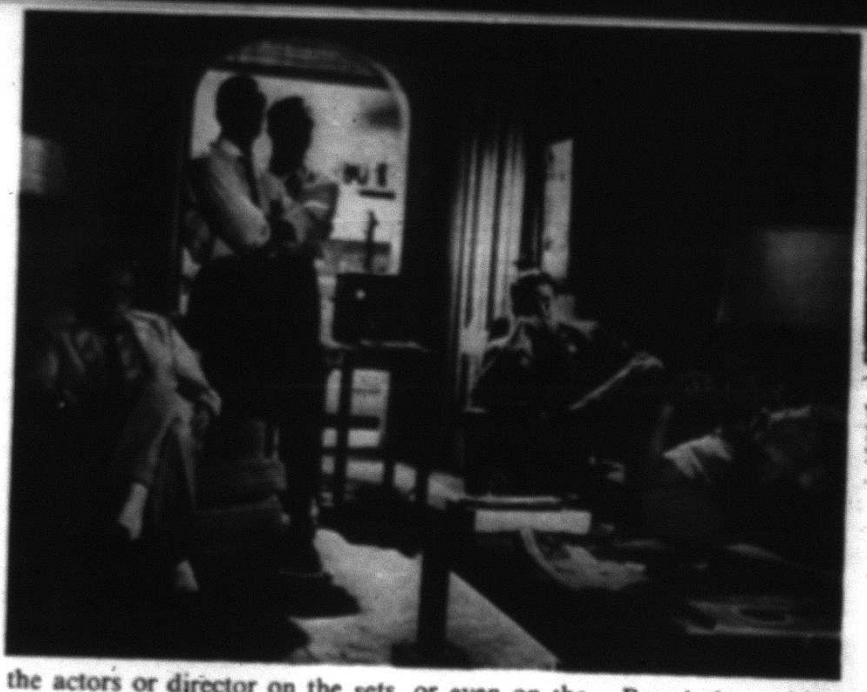
By GORDON McDOUGALL

IN 1909, because of the serious risk of fire when inflammable films were shown in unsuitable places, the Cinematograph Act gave to the County Councils and County Borough Councils the right to license cinemas, and in 1911 two High Court judgements showed that in doing this the government had in practice granted the right of censorship, thus setting up some 700 minor censoring authorities.

At the same time, a number of film companies, worried at the recent importation of some dubious foreign films which they thought might cast a slur on the British industry, asked the Home Secretary for an independent board of their own and a court of appeal sponsored by the government. He granted the first request, but the court of appeal still remains the 700 local authorities who have the right to reject the decisions of the British Board of Film Censors as they see fit. The Warwickshire County Council have now set up a sub-committee to examine the Board's judgements, after refusing to allow *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* to be shown in Warwickshire. (It appears that the inhabitants of the prohibited county all caught buses to Birmingham.)

The Board is financially independent of grants from the industry, its only source of revenue being the fee paid for the censoring of each film. It sees some 500 main features and 1000 shorts a year. Mr. John Trevelyan, OBE, Secretary of the Board, faced me with a broadside on supra-intellectualist literature about "The Film". He regards the cinema as a medium primarily for entertainment, and although he does not deny its deeper possibilities, he is annoyed by views which discount entertainment altogether.

It is the policy of the Board to do as much of its business as possible before the film is completed. Companies are encouraged to submit scripts for advice and Mr. Trevelyan will often advise about categories and doubtful scenes with



Left: Cut — this sequence from Paddy Chayefsky's Bachelor Party *where the characters watch a series of pornographic films. Only the party's reactions were shown in the film, but the whole episode was cut by the censor.*

Below right: This sequence from Jean-Pierre Melville's Les Enfants Terribles *was cut in England.*

Previous page: A shot from Barbro Roman's Paris Playgirls.

the actors or director on the sets, or even on the floor in course of production.

Each film is shown initially to two examiners who may disagree and submit it to further opinions. Any important film, or any film about which he has had previous contacts is shown to Mr. Trevelyan, and often to Lord Morrison of Lambeth, the President. The system of advising before completion of a film is helpful to the industry and recently enabled a Hollywood director to see several unpleasant nuances in a scene which he had never intended, in time for the scene to be re-shot. It can also help a man like Disney over the difference in taste between British and American children. American trailers have a tendency to isolate all the violence to be gathered from a film and sandwich it together. As all trailers shown in Britain must be granted a "U" Certificate, many have to be cut drastically. A recent Disney trailer consisted entirely of a number of sequences of dogs fighting. The film itself proved delightful, the violent episodes being only incidental. Two years ago much trouble was caused when trailers for *Callgirl* and *The Trollenberg Terror* were screened immediately after a showing of *tom thumb*. Many compromises are reached through personal contact: a notable one recently was arranged on the floor of Gary Cooper's last film, and I witnessed a telephone compromise in the office over the cutting of an urgently-required trailer.

Unlike the American censors, the British Board has no rules to adhere to. This enables it to be more lenient with *"a film of integrity"* and to change its policy as public reaction changes. Four years ago it would never have been possible to show a film concerned with AID, but now, through responsible press and television discussion, the subject has become an open question and such a film was recently passed. There is no political censorship of any kind, though the Board does object to a film which deliberately sets out to tear an individual apart. Such a film, *Holiday on Sylt*, dealing with the life of Speidel, was recently refused a certificate in this country and can therefore only be publicly shown by special consent of a local authority. The individual can of course sue for libel, but in Mr. Trevelyan's view this is not enough. *"The fact that it also attempted to undermine a political organisation is irrelevant. We believe that the commercial cinema — and I stress the word commercial—is not the place for such material."* There is very little religious censorship, largely because the nature of the high-ranking personnel in the industry, particularly in Hollywood, renders it unnecessary, but *"we would censor any film that a reasonable-minded man might be expected to take offence at. For instance, if someone made a musical out of the New Testament . . ."*

One of the major causes of cutting is sexual sadism. Limits to love scenes have been stepped out considerably in recent years but they still exist. Some years ago an orgasm was cut from a French film of recognised quality; Mr. Trevelyan was asked by an undergraduate for his justification of this, since such experiences formed a recognised part of normal life. He replied by asking the undergraduate whether there were any portions of his own life which he would consider unsuitable for public exhibition, and he had to admit that there were. *"It is simply a question of drawing the line . . . We object to films which seem to be telling the young that promiscuity is fashionable. We accept promiscuity so long as it is not regarded as the normal ocurrence. Our policy is largely based on that indefinable quality called taste."* He does not think that there is a serious danger of *"good taste"* degenerating into insipidity.

In the case of foreign films a list of sub-titles has to be approved. The Board is not responsible for the inanity of many sub-titles, though sub-titling often forms an attempt to clean up the language of the original. *"We regard anyone intelligent enough to understand the original as intelligent enough not to be harmed by its sentiments."* In many cases sub-titles can distract from a slightly dubious action in the filming. Dubbing also has to be censored — Mr. Trevelyan had just seen a dubbed version of *The Virgin Spring*: *"It completely alters its character."*

I asked Mr. Trevelyan about specific films, among them *Never Take Sweets from a Stranger*, which was allowed only an "X" Certificate though concerned with the danger to over-trusting children. It came from a company with a reputation for sensational films but *"the critic who refused to take it as a serious warning because of this was misguided. We thought it too alarming for children. The one thing we think we do know about children's reactions is that they tend to identify themselves with children on the screen, and any child who saw the film might have regarded each old man he saw as a potential rapist. We though it a sufficient warning to parents."* Bergman has expressed a view that the cuts made in *The Virgin Spring* (actual cuts are confidential) destroy the balance between the rape and the revenge. There is a considerable danger of spoiling the symmetry of a film by cutting, but Mr. Trevelyan does not think this a case in point. In spite of Michael Croft's assertion, he denies that there was great trouble over *Spare the Rod*. *"We could only give an "X" Certificate to the script that was submitted to us some eight years ago, because its point of view seemed to be that schoolmasters in general were sadists. The new version treats the subject from an entirely different angle."* I was surprised at the exhibition of *Carry on Nurse* with a "U" Certificate. Apparently it belongs to the English tradition of broad, vulgar farce, what one might call innocently vulgarity. Salacious jokes are not comprehensible by the young if there is an alternative meaning to them. *"What we don't want is for the child to have to ask any adult why he is laughing. Besides, we are much more ready to pass a joke if we find it funny."* Mr. Trevelyan has no clue as to what he is going to do about *Lolita*.

I wondered whether the British Board was more strict in its policy than those in other countries. Presumably we are less severe than Russia, judging by Mr. Kruschev's disgust at the inoffensive *Can-Can*. We seem to censor violence more than practically any other country. But *"Ghana and India refuse to allow any sex at*

CONTINUED FOOT OF NEXT PAGE

THE WESTERN

No branch of the cinema contains so many stylised and conventional parts as the Western, the only genre of film which Hollywood has completely invented and developed. One-Eyed Jacks, *the first film directed by Marlon Brando, has had a crop of lengthy and none too complimentary reviews. The fact that, in this work, Brando has excised many of the staler elements of the formulated Western and gilded many others so that they protrude even more prominently than usual makes it worthy of serious attention.*

By PETER COWIE

THE WESTERN has scarcely ever been a vehicle for technical panache or innovations (until the imagination and fireworks in Paul Wendkos' treatment of *Face of a Fugitive*, 1959). Even the flamboyant Brando rarely attempts to discard the conventional means of arousing tension. Like the majority of directors, he has adopted a thematic approach to the Western. He has sought to establish an atmosphere of *revenge* in *One-Eyed Jacks*, and to a tremendous extent this atmosphere depends on Brando's sulky playing and the integration of character with landscape (especially during the scenes on the beach near Monterey). His effort is successful, if not completely, at least to a degree which makes the film axiomatic of a whole series of "psychological" Westerns which have sprung up in recent years.

James Cruze's *The Covered Wagon* (1923) remained for years the prototype of the Hollywood Western. The prescription demanded a good historical narrative spiced with human melodrama. Quite often—as in *The Iron Horse*, John Ford's first major Western, and *Cimarron* (1931)—this formula produced an epic film, imbued with excitement and national sentiment. But broadly speaking the Western for more than two decades never sought to achieve any effect other than strong and romantic emotion. Wellman's *The Oxbow Incident* (1943), with its shrewd examination of the temperament of a lynch-mob, was a forerunner of the "psychological" Western of more recent times. In 1952 Fred Zinnemann, with *High Noon*, suddenly fused all the conventional elements—suspense, exciting climax, sheriff versus outlaws—into a bitter attack on intolerance and lack of community-spirit. But in the next year there came a swift return to the traditional Western with *Shane*, almost perfect of its kind. Everything about the film was conventional, and yet George

→

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

all." Apparently one is hardly allowed to shake hands in an Indian film. In France there is political censorship, and René Clair and Clouzot are disturbed at the reputation the French film is receiving for sexual and violent atrocities, largely because the French Industry cannot, for example, make a film about the police or the housing situation.

What are the Board's greatest problems? *"Violence, most definitely: three-quarters of our work is concerned with violence. A director* WILL *show fourteen of fifteen blows instead of two, giving a thrill only to those people we need to discourage from violence";* (though there is, of course, the purgative, ritualistic element of dramatic art to be considered). *"We dislike the principle that authority is something necessarily to be revolted from, and the notion that if you have a gun you are somebody."*

The question of television censorship is the business of the Pilkington Committee, but, though the authorities have the right to reject the Board's decisions, in practice they rarely do. Mr. Trevelyan has contacts with both Carleton Green and Sir Robert Frazer, but would not like to have to censor for television, which he believes as a different medium has a different angle of influence.

Is film censorship in Britain satisfactory? *"Not completely — as no system which must rely on individual opinion can be satisfactory."* Certainly it is more artistically satisfying to discuss a film in its normal habitat with one or two other people than to adjudicate on the merits and demerits of a book in a crowded court of law. The Board does not work at pistol-point; ninety-nine per-cent of its work is done with the co-operation of directors and producers, and it has never had a serious quarrel with a major company. It is small companies striving to attract attention by sensationalism that call forth its strictures.

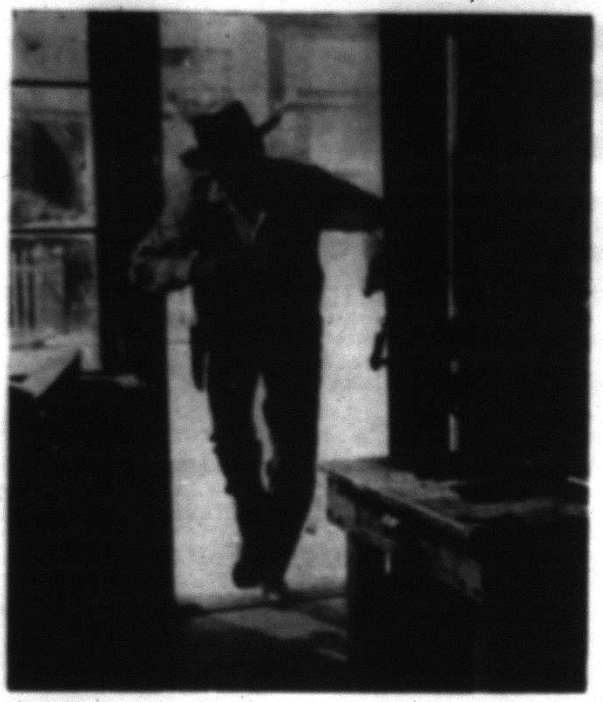
...AND BRANDO

Stevens' direction and possibly the unusual locations among the mountains of Montana completely refreshed the old aproach.

But since *Shane* the more important and fascinating Westerns have touched on topical themes: racial prejudice (notably in Huston's *The Unforgiven* and Ford's sadly-marred *Sergeant Rutledge*); the strength and weakness of friendship or blood-ties (*Warlock, Saddle the Wind,* and *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral*); and the idealistic theory that in certain circumstances an amoral character will behave virtuously (*Face of a Fugitive, The Tin Star*). Each of these films has faults, and nearly all of them are thematic rather than technical. For instance, *Face of a Fugitive* is spoilt by its one bit of pretentiousness —the undue stress on the remorse of Kincaid for his brother, and *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* fails because of Sturges' desire to develop the characters of Wyatt Earp *and* Doc Holliday so as to explain their mutual loyalty in the final battle. Resultantly, too many sub-plots have to be treated and suspense is lost. Sturges has a far firmer grasp of *Bad Day at Black Rock*, wherein he concentrates entirely on the unusual and exciting personality of McCreedy (Spencer Tracy).

Marlon Brando has been interested neither in making a Western that relies almost completely on stereotyped characters, such as *Shane* and *The Big Country;* nor in building up a heroic leading figure, as was Kazan in *Viva Zapata* and Zinnemann in *High Noon.* Rather he has attempted to study the character and motives of Rio the *outlaw*, who is deserted by his "friend" Dad Longworth when they are being chased for a robbery in Mexico. On his release from prison five years later, Rio determines to hunt down the renegade, and finds that Longworth has become Sheriff of Monterey.

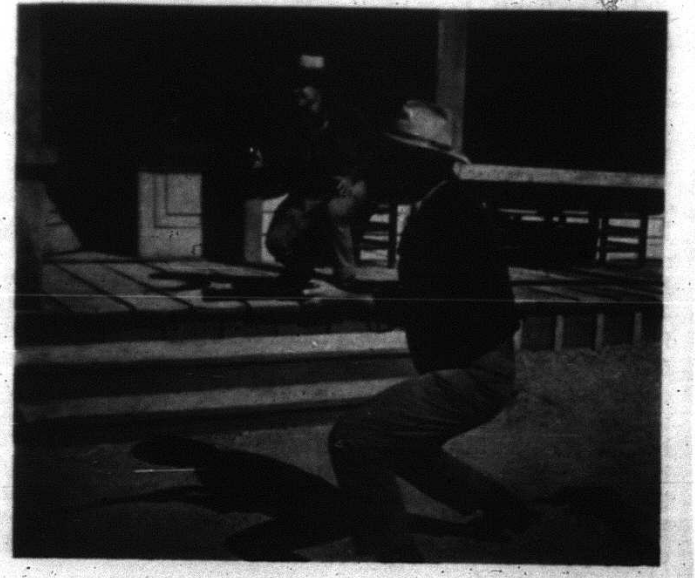
At every stage of *One-Eyed Jacks* the conception of Rio as a "good" man is effectively destroyed; he lies carefully, convincingly, and continually; he is humiliated by Sheriff Longworth and nurses revenge, revenge on Longworth personally. It is interesting here to compare Brando's interpretation of the hero with that of Wyler in *The Westerner* (1940), where Cole Harden (Gary Cooper) vows revenge on Judge Bean (Walter Brennan) for his contemptible treatment of the homesteaders, not so much for any personal slight. It is obvious from *One-Eyed Jacks* that the idealistic picture of the Western



hero has faded somewhat. In fact one of the more arresting features of the film is that Brando has laid his story in an inordinately romantic setting and at the same time treated the plot realistically so that the characters are dense rather than superficial and the incidents (the whipping, the final gun-fight) are credible rather than fanciful. By contrast, such films as *The Westerner* (with its dreamy portrayal of Lily Langtry) and *The Plainsman*, directed by Cecil B. de Mille in the thirties, are highly romantic.

It is also fascinating to find in Brando's Rio a fighter who has to preserve himself finally by shooting his opponent in the back. The hackneyed climax to the Western has shown the hero engaging his arch-enemy at dawn, sunset, or in a hushed saloon. This picturesque tradition still persists in such films as *The Big Country* and *Last Train From Gun-Hill*. Nearly always the hero's strength has stemmed from his skill as a gunman: when this skill escapes him, he must die. This message is transmitted most explicitly through Robert Parrish's *Saddle the Wind* (1958), where Tony (John Cassavetes) is driven to death by an irresponsible temperament which has been aggravated by his living under the scornful eye of his elder brother. Symbolically, he shoots at his own reflection in a puddle. He is a fallible fighter, and ultimately so because he is not quite efficient enough with his gun. But Brando develops this idea even more effectively in that Rio wins his most important battles (with Longworth and the sadistic deputy) by bluff and deception *after* his firepower has been ceremoniously extinguished by Longworth's smashing of his right hand. This is why the outlaws' desertion of Rio draws so important a demarcation line across *One-Eyed Jacks*. One of them, Bob Amory, says to him cynically, "I reckon even I could outpull you now." From this moment onwards Rio strives to prove that a man slow on the draw can still win, providing his spirit is sufficiently strong.

This theory that the individual is only meritorious according to his own behaviour and is intent primarily on saving his own skin, was previously epitomised in *High Noon;* and in both this film and *One-Eyed Jacks* the implication is that society has forced the hero into this *impasse;* at the beginning of Brando's film Rio declares solemnly that he did not have "a fine upbringing" and that this exonerates him from blame for his amoral acts. In the older style of Western, however, the individual was celebrated by virtue of his honesty, courage, and community-spirit (Anthony Mann's remake of *Cimarron* demon-



Above: Fred Zinnemann's High Noon, *a "fusion of all the conventional elements." It was written by Carl Foreman.*

Below: Howard Hawks' Rio Bravo. *Old traditions under a sugaring of psychological characterisation.*

Previous page: Karl Marlden and Marlon Brando in One-Eyed Jacks.

Facing page: Marlon Brando and Pina Pellicer in One-Eyed Jacks.

strated this). Indeed, it is only the continued use of the individual as an heroic figure on the horizon that has disguised the change of stress in the Western from an objective, panoramic view of stirring events (the Great Trek, the Oklahoma land-rush) to a subjective analysis of character and its behaviour in certain situations.

Brando has also abandoned the customary locale of the Western in *One-Eyed Jacks*, and the exteriors are shot beside a booming, boiling sea that suggests the anger and capriciousness of Rio. Occasionally Charles Lang Jr., the photographer, has used the colour film to an imaginative degree; there is one excellent moment when Rio leaves Dad Longworth's house after dinner and his face is framed against the jet-black sky over the sea, a hint at the implacable hatred Rio bears towards the sheriff, even though he smiles amicably. The best Italian directors have made skilful use of seascapes in their work, and with them generally create an air of disillusionment (as in *La Dolce Vita*, *Le Amiche*, and *L'Avventura*). in *One-Eyed Jacks* the disillusionment is continuous: it is on the beach that Louisa gradually becomes aware of the real character of Rio, of his propensity for lying and of his sworn desire to kill her step-father; it is beside the sea that Rio is deserted by his outlaw companions because their faith in him as leader has disappeared; and it is on the shore soon afterwards that Modesto (Rio's friend from prison) is callously shot to death. There is also the notable opening sequence when Rio and Longworth are fleeing from the Rurales. Rio is left to his fate by Longworth, and as he glances round him apprehensively a sand-storm arises, indicating the ugliness of his companion's deed (he never returns with fresh horses as arranged), and perhaps a forecast too of the anger that will shortly swirl up within Rio.

Yet not even Brando, in his alleged "assault on the temple of clichés" can avoid using certain well-tried features of the Western — the terse dialogue, the slickly-shot gunfight in the bar, Rio's pride in not betraying emotion, the villainous nature of Longworth (established carefully with the Hitlerian moustache, the disfigured nose, the continual bars of shadow thrown across his face). And, most noticeably of all, Brando has persisted with the perennial parallel editing to achieve his climax (prolonged cross-cutting between Rio, snarling in his cell, and Longworth riding into Monterey to kill him). In some part this adherence to traditional ingredients makes *One-Eyed Jacks* a film as entertaining as it is bizarre. And who, even Ford, has ever made a Western that does not contain hammy performances in the minor rôles?

One-Eyed Jacks cannot be regarded as perfect for it is too fraught with symbols that draw attention to themselves and offset the drama

(the Mona Lisa hanging in the saloon, for example), and it lacks the discipline that distinguishes the best Westerns. Yet it is fair to maintain that Brando has, by choosing an unusual plot and setting his characters in an exotic environment, managed to investigate his two leading men in a most penetrating way as well as to establish an overwhelming atmosphere of hatred and vengeance. And with this promising début, Brando arouses in one the hope that he may develop into a second Welles. Moreover, when a director manages to eschew Brando's love of aestheticism for its own sake without losing his flair for characterisation, then he may produce a faultless Western.

WE LIKE (I):

EARLIER THIS year, writing about Antonioni's *Il Grido* in *Time & Tide*, Clancy Sigal suggested it deserved a commercial distribution. We congratulate Mondial Films for their enterprise in opening the film at the Paris Pullman, where, needless to say, we suggest you spend an evening if you are in town. This latest move by Mondial does not surprise us. The company's record is a fine one, comparable with the more vaunted catalogues of Curzon and Contemporary. Some of their past titles include, *L'Avventura*, *Moderato Cantabile*, *Pickpocket*, *Cabiria*, *The Lovers*, *Lunch on the Grass*, *Two Pennyworth of Hope*, and many others. Future releases include *Il Cristo Proibito*, and Fons Rademakers' *The Knife*.

CRIBBINGS...

"IN THE relatively short period of about two hours of screen time, Bardot laughs, cries, jives, performs an intriguing version of the cha cha while lying in bed, hums Stravinsky, shouts, screams, makes love, and finally shoots to kill.

" 'This girl', says Clouzot, 'is a born actress. I am astounded at her intelligence, at her sensitivity as a performer.' "

Publicity Bulletin on 'La Verite'

"WE regret that as a result of the request of the owner of the Dreamland Pleasure Garden, we are now unable to give bookings to Lindsay Anderson's film *O Dreamland*."

Distributor's Newsletter

"SIX WEEKS of research at 75 hospitals went into the selection of equipment for scenes. Four other hospitals lent space for authentic locations and in autopsy scenes real human organs were used."

Publicity Bulletin on "The Young Doctors"

" 'WHAT,' SHE (Sophia Loren) demanded to know 'is America gone crazy with this sexy business? What are people interested in an actress? Not in her acting. What then?' One girl gets to be a star, said Sophia, because she 'looks like she can give more milk than a cow'."

From "Cue", quoted in "What's On in London"

"A HUSBAND is threatening to leave his wife because she is going to do a striptease in a film called *Cry of Desire* . . . She added that she and her friends were making the film because the standard of second feature films is so low.

'This film will have the lot', said Mary. 'We want to get an X certificate and have the film put on circuit'."

Daily Herald

"MISS NOVAK will also make her dancing debut in the picture 'Jason and the Golden Fleece'." "It's a sort of dance of the seven veils but more spiritual. It takes place in a temple."

Evening Standard

"THE CINEMA manager cleared his throat, stepped up to the microphone and said: 'Ladies and gentlemen. I have to tell you that Russia and America have declared war on each other.'

"Then he stepped down and waited for the reaction. One man stouted: 'Hurray'. A dozen women left the hall. The other 200 just went on playing Bingo . . .

"Mr. Watters, manager of the Star Cinema in Lochgelly, Fife, continued to think the world was at war until seven hours later when he went home and saw the late TV news."

Daily Herald

JUDGING by current consumption around 11,000 anti-seasick tablets will have been passed out by the time location filming aboard ship has been finished on the Columbia picture "The Mutineers".

Publicity Bulletin

Important...

Hints reach us that our treatment of "B" films (or more properly co-features) in the last issue aroused considerable interest. "Face of a Fugitive" was a new title to us as no doubt to you too; a couple of recent Classics showings have given us the chance to see it and like it. It is hard to get to isolated films once they have been generally shown — especially if they're almost unknown. It is important that titles such as "Face of a Fugitive" should be seen if they and their makers are to receive due appreciation (or be confined to just oblivion).

MOTION is prepared to consider screening "Face of a Fugitive" (and later other films of exceptional interest). We'd like to do it on 35 mm. hiring a small cinema, perhaps one Sunday afternoon in a London suburb. **Would you support us? Really?** Then please send us your name and address as a potential supporter, and tell us at what time of the year a screening would be most convenient. People who like the film would be there to argue about it.

Other sugested titles are: Kubrick's "Killer's Kiss", "Pay or Die", Samuel Fuller's "Run of the Arrow".

More cinemas... or less? ALLEN EYLES, with help from MARCUS EAVIS, takes a look at the way films are shown and concludes it's time for a change if the cinema is to have a bright future.

FOCUS on EXHIBITION

YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED that there aren't as many cinemas as there used to be. And when cinemas as sizeable, well-located and comfortably run as the Odeon Wembley, Granada Walthamstow and Gaumont Wembley, Granada Walthamfrom the London scene, it is clear that the crisis in film exhibition is far from over.

MOST FILM ENTHUSIASTS we know just don't care. For their concern is less with the popular cinema of the big circuits and more with the world of films societies and small "art houses", a world which largely remains intact.

IS THIS LACK of concern good enough? Personally, we'd like to see the film remain as a mass medium. The good films can be big ones. We'd also like to see the film become culturally respectable, as it is in so many other countries. That our cinema has never shed its initial aura of fairground vulgarity is largely the fault of the rabid commercialists who have exerted a stranglehold on its proper development . . . and today are quite happy to begin deserting it when it most needs imaginative reconstruction and fair play. The critics, too, with many honourable exceptions, in so readily accepting as an absolute maxim "Films are Entertainment" and in often having no qualifications whatsoever for their job (the relate-the-plot school), have collaborated in hiding the fact that certain films are to be thought about, are not to provide 'escape' but to illuminate reality. We both regret that our local Odeon is usually two-thirds empty and that we rarely have to fight to get into the National Film Theatre. Our concern here is not with any division of cinema into two levels by drawing up our own "Crosby-Cocteau line" but in suggesting how exhibition might be re-shaped to allow every film to reach the full audience that wants to see it.

THE POPULAR CINEMA

The easiest way of getting the "product" round has been the circuit pattern, most recently adjusted in 1958 to give three alternatives, the Rank, ABC or National release, one of which every big British film must obtain to stand even a chance of recovering its costs. The Rank release guarantees a showing at the most important Odeons and Gaumonts, just as the ABC release means principally a tour of ABC's theatres. Where both an Odeon and Gaumont existed in the same locality, the older, smaller or least well-sited (anyway, the least popular) of the two was generally assigned to the National release. The independent cinemas fill up gaps in the Rank and ABC circuits where possible, but in general have been forced on to the National circuit.

Now ABC and Rank set high standards of comfort that few independents can equal; this, plus the strength and connections of these two major companies, has acted against the National release cinemas to make them largely the dumping ground of box-office disasters. Independents began defecting from the poorer programmes or closed down; only the few Rank cinemas have persistently screened the National programmes, and this nucleus has been substantially reduced, especially in London, by Rank shuttering very many of them. Its potential take has slumped

to averaging half that of the other two circuits, and the industry sees its basic problem as being to reconstitute the National release so that distributors will regain faith sufficiently to let it have more profitable pictures. This is seen to involve rigidifying its structure so that, if the industry can manage it, it's back to tradition. No cinema manager we've ever spoken to has been able to defend the three-circuit pattern except for its very simplicity.

For what sense can there be in playing almost every film for a set seven days (or a half-week in smaller areas) in all kinds of localities, with the additional ramification that in London there are three weirdly constructed regional areas to which a film is confined in turn? What film suits both Stepney and Kensington equally? And the National release, taking left-overs of widly varying nature and quality which cannot hope to produce any continuity of attendance from its small patronage is the hardest hit of all. Granada, whose cinemas are run with dash and high comfort, brought the fresh air of rebellion to this antiquated structure by pioneering the extended run of films like *The King and I* in the suburbs and achieving real success. Were this widely practised today, weak films could be presented for shorter periods with less playing time being left available; revivals and Continental films could be more readily introduced to solve shortages without having to overstay their welcome (as Jacques Tati's *My Uncle* did through being tied to 7-day runs in the traditional manner with all sizes of theatre and locations to contend with. The Rank Organisation, claiming the results to be "disastrous," have kept foreign films off the Rank release ever since, while ABC and National have taken a few sex films of which only the phenomenally successful *Never on Sunday* can lay claim to artistic merit. *My Uncle's* failure could have been more fairly regarded as necessary to "break in" foreign films of merit to make them eventually profitable . . .).

With the London regions also abolished, but with the same or a greater number of films in release all over at one time, people who can't wait or want to see a film again or missed one, could still hope to find it in easy reach. Perhaps a West End presentation could become the culmination of a film's London run, making for a last central (and hence accessible) screening of any popular film prior to withdrawal for an ordered reissue at a later date.

The popular cinema we would most like to see, though, would allow every cinema to bid for each new film, the ones naturally most popular or suited for a certain class of film thereby being in the strongest position. This would, we suspect, make many cinemas existing on second-run or the meagre supply of surplus films, despite good management and location, through being outside the three circuits, far happier. The Embassy Clifton, Bristol, and the Cardiff Park Hall (temporarily out of the fray with *Ben Hur*) would seem to fit this category.

With freer trading, size of cinemas would not be important. Small houses could promise longer runs and accomodate films best suited to this form of presentation. For, in Sutton, Surrey, with only a vast Granada and by contrast a minute Curzon which both programme basically according to traditional circuit attachments, the most equitable arrangement for either film or theatre is not reached. Also, clashing of box-office hits would be less harmful if both films involved could be retained long enough to exhaust their potential rather than forcing patrons to choose within a short period. Of necessity, this is only a brief sketch of a complex suggestion.

THE SPECIALIST CINEMA

This part of cinema clearly consists of those films that the majority of cinemagoers don't get to see . . . which include the gimmick pictures (nudity and horror; sex and sadism) which entice (and further debase the standards of) the moronic element. (The "best" do get circuit breaks, but the Rank release in particular avoids them). Exploitation subjects can have limited screen-time in any case, for the public won't be fooled too often. Cinemas which have taken to full-time programming of this sort have usually gone out of business by attracting hooliganism, thus shedding the regular patronage that has lingered, and eventually running empty when the louts have no-one left to annoy and go on to plague better-run cinemas.

At this stage, many cinemas (rather like the State, Leytonstone) have desperately reversed their policies to play Continental pictures of some standard, but they were rarely comfortable enough or persevering enough to shed their old image and build up from scratch a new audience fast enough to please their proprietors . . . and so they went dark.

Cinemas simply taking second run, through local circuit houses getting films first, rarely survived either (tens of Rank houses surplus to circuit requirements were thus shuttered in late 1956).

Yet where there was respect for audiences' taste in comfort and entertainment, we can see a different tale. The splendid example of the

FOCUS ON EXHIBITION

Classic Cinemas in adapting to changes is to our mind an instant criticism of Rank's indifference to properties of similar size and location. Even before the real crisis set in, the Classics had been screening an enormously varied range of revivals (even today they operate on a repertory basis for all films except at two first-run Continental houses in Leeds and Glasgow) and were not afraid of a few Continental films or an occasional showing for *Citizen Kane*. Today, in adroitly balancing really old titles with recent Continental successes and covering the period between, Classic have most successfully mixed an obvious love of cinema with due consideration for their shareholders' interests. The company has in fact considerable non-cinema interests, but one is sure it must be the cinemas they take the most pride in.

There are a few cinemas—the Academy or Curzon in London, the Glasgow Cosmo, for instance—which play with real success full-time quality films of a standard we more associate with film societies. And there is the probably unique Hampstead Everyman, a very small, admirably located house which serves the whole of London rather in the way the National Film Theatre does.

Classic have made necessary compromises to serve larger, more localised audiences, creating a formula to suit each location. The small Classic at Swindon, for example, will support very few Continental films; but the company has made some effort to raise standards by playing the occasional offbeat picture. They emphasise their reluctance to play sex-epics, but perhaps allow an unnecessary amount of more innocuous trash to be screened. Apart from operating several mysteriously popular cartoon theatres (and aiming to make drastic improvements in the range and quality of their shows, perhaps since one of them has had *The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film* more than six months) there are the Classics, headed by the one in Baker Street, which screen a varying ratio of quality Continental and reissue programmes.

The best justification of Classic's policies, whatever their shortcomings, is how triumphantly they work. Classic have had to write off one or two cinemas, against which can be counted several which they have added, and now their cinemas, with two exceptions, do very well. While more ambitious schemes like the Pullman chain of several years back have foundered (probably from making too radical a change) Classic have slowly made a transition from an old-fashioned, rather stiff image to one of a flexible, up to date nature that has been subject to courageous experiment. Much talk is devoted to remodelling modes of presentation: but Classic have actually run cinemas with separate performances, advance booking, no smoking nights, and exclusive Continental programming without gaining real support . . . but the effort was made, and Classic still retain the idea of seasons, runs of varying length, single features in certain locations, tea and coffee services besides the usual ice-cream sales (or *Films and Filming* from the foyer) and are extending late-night shows outside the West End. Most remarkably, they have imported special 16 m.m. equipment to revive famous films no longer available on the standard 35 m.m., taking a gamble that cinemagoers will remember long-absent titles. *Tugboat Annie* (1932, Marie Dressler, Wallace Beery) didn't take, but the Garbo and Marx Brothers' seasons recently run in this way were big successes . . . and on the whole the technical problems of retaining definition and clear sound have been overcome.

Thus today Classic are confident of the future. Their own decline in attendances, never near the national level, has halted, and they view the near-saturation of TV sets as marking necessarily an impending revival of interest in their kind of cinema. Classic, with other enterprising managers, quite agree that the market for quality cinemas is there and exists far more extensively than they can cover it. Any loss of business through new rivals would be compensated for by the overall increased interest in good films. Similarly, too many exhibitors still fail to appreciate that film societies and the National Film Theatre stimulate *new* interest in films which it is up to them to make use of. But Classic are inclined to doubt the extent that interest in films of really alien cultures from outside the West European area exists. While an occasional *Kanal* or *World of Apu* may do well, and they will happily accept it, these will be exceptions. However, Charles Cooper, the managing director of Contemporary Films, has consistently attempted to expand the range of acceptance by bringing into the country films that literally come from about every producing nation. He thinks that a chain of 100 cinemas, run rather like the Academy in London, could profitably exist throughout the country, screening a feature and shorts without screen advertising or traditional paraphernalia. They should, he feels, have a loose corporate identity and must rigorously maintain high standards even though losses might have to be sustained until interest is really aroused. This "circuit," plus existing art-houses, could even yield sufficient revenue to make independent *British* production of low cost feasible without the necessity of compromises to secure a circuit break.

Could it work? Classic, who *do* utilise screen advertising, trailers, ice-cream and confectionary

FOCUS ON EXHIBITION

sales (in fact, largely echo general practice), are inclined to doubt whether increased patronage would cover the loss in revenue from these sources . . . and certainly consider they don't lose any admissions by their approach. Yet such cinemas as Charles Cooper envisages might be just the kind to attract back those people who have deserted the cinema or have never attended much through finding it hard to differentiate from TV both in the method and the quality of presentations. An audience gained by quality films in cinemas where they can feel welcome would constitute a more faithful body than the teenagers into whose hands has devolved the support of many a circuit house. (And, who knows, bowling alleys might suit the next generation best . . .).

Whether or not new cinemas could be established as Mr. Cooper would like, new cinemas on Classic lines could surely exist in areas of 150,000 people at least. Many towns of far larger size are today serviced by a mere one specialist cinema slickly combining all levels of foreign film with sensational advertising wherever humanly possible, as for "Hiroshima, Mon Amour". Also, the cost of building new cinemas is so immense (in the region of £100 per seat) that towns without existing ones capable of conversion are unlikely ever to obtain art-cinemas. And since many existing cinemas are on prominent sites, they are prone to be lost for other purposes, sometimes by wholesale redevelopment of an area, sometimes at the termination of a lease (at which time Classic were unable to retain their Hammersmith theatre). Whole regions seem to exist without art-cinemas; West of Bristol is one (although a small Torquay independent has recently experimented with films like "L'Avventura").

One hope for the future is that cinemas, despite access to a circuit release, will find it profitable to deviate occasionally and play a specialised programme (as the Regal Barnet and Hampstead Playhouse do in the London-area, for example); or at least replace the second features (like the Odeon Kensington). Better still, the enterprising Globe at Putney puts the emphasis the other way, occasionally taking a National release but more frequently playing Continental double-bills of often staggering quality.

It must be particularly frustrating to the 2—3 million viewers of TV's excellent "The Cinema Today" series to see films in extract with little later chance of seeing them complete. Of course, there is the large Film Society movement, but to leave it there is obviously inadequate. The 16mm prints most use are of inferior quality as too often are the accommodation and presentation; audiences are numerically small (and restricted by advertising prohibitions if not by seating space for their maximum) while time exists to screen comparatively few films. Also, the voluntary effort and enthusiasm needed to run such a project is too often partly lacking or spasmodic in nature, and membership (involving payment for a whole season) can mean an average cost per film in excess of commercial prices.

What can be done with real determination to advance is shown by a current £93,000 project of the People's Theatre Art Group in Newcastle. This involves the transformation of the attractively located Lyric Cinema at Heaton, a suburb near the town centre, into a home for the Group, a member of which is Tynes de Film Society. With only £19,000 yet to be raised, the back wall of the building is now being entirely rebuilt to provide a deep stage, the stalls are being halved to give an enlarged foyer for interval use, lectures and art exhibitions, and the result will be a superb auditorium of 962 seats (with the old balcony left intact) for the Society's film shows.

Large film societies should at least approach local cinemas and offer artistic direction if they are prepared to finance and only partially control a reputable Club on their premises, perhaps screening films on a slack evening. Full-scale promotion of such a Club could revitalise interest in public programmes which might come to include Continental films. Many cinemas could obtain more dignity in a community without foregoing success, and might repay Societies for their help by subsidising an offshoot to study more truly esoteric films, the general social activities, or the introduction of film-making.

The financial support of commercial groups would really be essential. The State Leytonstone was saved from extinction by the enterprise of its manageress who took over the lease and instituted quality programmes. So far so good, but in becoming a Club full-time and making members shareholders with at least a £1 stake in the company, perhaps the only way to obtain a sound financial footing, the State has required a faith to invest money in its future that has not been too readily forthcoming, while its attendances have been less then satisfactory. The approach, particularly of excluding the general public (who could be admitted at higher prices than members pay) and in competing with the National Film Theatre set-up, has been too ambitious; but the venture deserves to succeed.

THE FUTURE OF CINEMA

Until Pay-TV shows its face, this remains vague. Surveys suggest the cost of transmitting coin-in-the-slot shows to be so high as to make real popularity essential; this could well mean that a film like "Wild Strawberries", hardly family viewing even where it would be of interest, would be so costly (spread over the fewer viewers per set) that the incentive of a night out to see the film at a little higher cost, with a change of atmosphere, better picture and choice of time, would be decisive. The future of the art-cinema, trading on the respect of its patrons, seems more assured than that of the local picture palace, where especially for older patrons the average film would lose comparatively little of its effect by diminution onto a tele-tube.

Still, we have a shrewd suspicion Pay-TV won't wipe out the area between art and epic, providing cinemas provide a sense of occasion and service. Clearly it is important to retain the really well-equipped buildings rather than those whose opulence or lack of it dates from an earlier decade. When the Rank Organisation is closing cinemas like the Gaumont Streatham and Odeon Doncaster (the Gaumont entirely rebuilt inside

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

NAZI CRIMES and PUNISHMENT — THE FILMS

by PETER WRIGHT

WAR FILMS are a stock in trade of the cinema, but in recent years distinct changes have been obvious. Not only have U.S. Marines ceased to exchange laconic heroisms in landing craft about to beach and win the war; but to a certain extent less duffle-coated figures have been drowned at their ports of late. For this kind of film has tended to be replaced by a more brutalised and *soi-disant* serious film of which *The Cruel Sea* was perhaps the first example.

However, in the international film world there have been feature films of a surprising diversity dealing at a high level with themes connected with the last World War. From *Paisa* in immediate post-war Italy, to *A Generation* made in Gomulka's Poland, there have been films which depict man's reactions to war and the social effect of the war-time situation. However, such films have not tended to commentate on the nature or causes of the war-situation itself: rather it has been accepted as an independent variable, judged implicitly, but rarely explicitly analysed. In countries such as Poland and Russia where the war displayed its brutality in a way Britain and America almost entirely escaped, even today it needs less analysis and description. But in other countries (including, even, Western Germany), new generations have grown up who neither know, nor can accept, the facts of the last World War implicitly.

Associated with the new need for facts, there has been a tendency to produce three types of film:

1. Those such as *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, which with debatable success attempt to analyse both the brutality of war and its obsessive effect upon private relations.

2. The didactic films produced in East Germany, which attempt to highlight, for political reasons, Nazi brutality. Such films may range from a good feature like the East German-Bulgarian co-production *Stars*, through what are virtually political parables, to a documentary of some stature like *The German Story*.

3. Films like *Mein Kampf* and *Night and Fog*, which though no less certain of their condemnation of Fascism have been less certain than the Communist films of how to detect potential fascism today, or what its alternative must be.

A contributory cause to this rush of films depicting the nature of Nazism has probably been the various political events in Europe. The division of Germany, its rearmament, the economic miracle, and the appointment of ex-Nazis and even condemned war-criminals to high civil and military positions: these have all lead to a growing uneasiness and an obsession with the German past.

THE THORNDIKES

The originators of the didactic film dealing with German fascism were the East Germans, Andrew and Annellie Thorndike. In *The German Story* and their subsequent series *The Archives Testify*, they utilised the enormous stocks of Nazi newsreel captured from the Ministry of Propaganda. To each selection of such material they added film strip illustrating comparable events in Western Germany or the present-day successes of men closely involved with Nazi atrocities. Their films included a polemic against General Speidel, the film *A Diary for Anne* (concerned with the present whereabouts of those involved in the death of Anne Frank) and several others.

The Poles, too, produced *Under This Same Sky*, which in twenty minutes running time depicted the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto with extraordinary vividness. Here, in contrast with the Thorndikes' films, no attempt at drawing a conclusion was made; the only modern reference was a series of shots of toddlers playing today on the site of the old Ghetto.

"MEIN KAMPF"

The most adventurous film of this genre has to date been *Mein Kampf*. Utilising the Warsaw Ghetto newsreels used also in some of the Thorndike films and in *Under this Same Sky*, Erwin Leiser, a German exile living in Sweden, traces German history from before the First World War and relates it to Hitler's life. Here one might say is the liberal's answer to *The German Story* and to some extent one would be right: the film is reasonably objective (great trouble has been taken to obtain material from all possible sources and a great attempt has been made to avoid fortuitous horror in depicting atrocities.)

But if it demonstrated the best aspects of a liberal attitude, the film also demonstrated, to some extent, its worse. It ended, for example, with the trite appeal that this must never happen again. How could this help anyone? Unless the film were to draw attention to dangerous trends today, to practical needs such as an awareness of Fascism and racialism, this would have no

Right: Old style war film, Lewis Milestone's Pork Chop Hill.

Facing page: Scenes from Mein Kampf.

Previous page: Germans invade Poland, 1939.

Cover picture: The Higher Principle *(Czech).*

propaganda effect, but would rather leave a warm feeling of self-satisfied and non-controversial righteousness in every breast. This desire to be non-controversially negative was demonstrated, too, by the common over-emphasis of the importance of the July 14th plot. Interesting as the trial scenes were, they were also unfair in presentation. The various, more or less democratic, generals having served in high-ranking positions under Hitler for nine years, and having led the invasions that made the extermination of Jews and Slavs possible are characterised as defenders of liberty. Indeed, far more time is devoted to them than to the half-million German nationals who died in concentration camps.

Such criticisms, however, do not detract from either the importance or the success of *Mein Kampf;* coming at a time when the Eichmann trial is still on, when Germany is sooner or later to receive nuclear arms, and when immigration has brought many suburban families face to face with the problem of racialism, such a film could provide useful object lessons.

"NIGHT AND FOG"

In this consideration of films dealing with the Nazi period Resnais and his *Night and Fog* stand apart. The other films have been either predominantly newsreel material or, at any rate, so closely involved with the actual events that style and artistry become almost incidental considerations. Resnais, however, describes Auschwitz by analogy; comments by irony, letting the camera slowly record the decaying camp site he produces an effect in certain ways more horrifying than the newsreels. Just as the heaps of spectacles and dentures once worn by gassed inmates are more horrifying than their corpses, so the grassy Auschwitz compounds are coaxed into producing an insight of the infinite terror of the concentration camps. Here Resnais leaps the barrier of credibility inherent in all documentary films: one can grasp the misery of one death, but the misery of six million makes no greater impact. By indirectly commenting, Resnais avoids this mathematics and produces an aspect of a universal misery.

POINT OF CONTACT

Resnais and his style is probably the answer to the development of this type of film. History can be, and has been, described from various angles but very soon becomes overwhelming and divorced from human reality. Only through commentary and application can a fresh appreciation of facts be attained. *Mein Kampf* and *The German Story* have done their work: they have informed many (though not enough). The field now awaits application. Here, perhaps, is a point of contact with sensitive feature films such as the Wajda trilogy.

DON'T

By R. M. FRANCHI

MOTION U.S.A. Correspondent. Mr. Franchi is Editor of the *New York Film Bulletin* from which this article is reprinted.

ONE gets the most uncomfortable feeling that during the last few months there has been in motion a pre-planned, highly developed, purposeful and well designed public relations campaign centered around establishing the existence of an American "new wave". Gideon Bachmann's article in the current issue (Spring) of *Film Quarterly* is the latest bit of propaganda and it leaves no doubts that Mr. Bachmann has appointed himself as the author of and apologist for this mythical movement. In this piece, in a lengthy trade-slanted piece in *Variety*, on his radio programme *(The Film Art* and in various other places the British *Film*, etc.) he has been very busy creating the illusion that there exists in this country some form of a cohesive group that resembles *"La Nouvelle Vague"* of France.

Ironically the American "new wave" is not Mr. Bachmann's invention. Film critic Jonas Mekas initiated the idea under the title The New American Cinema, but Mr. Bachmann, with a much firmer grasp of what will appeal to both the "tastemakers and the mass audience" is responsible for its current appellation and has made it his own special province.

So successful has Mr. Bachmann's campaign been that it approaches blasphemy at this point to blatantly state that there is no such thing as an American new wave, but to group such films as *Shadows, Pull My Daisy, The Savage Eye, Private Property, The Shoes, Guns of the Trees, Don Peyote* and *Weddings and Babies* together and attempt to call it a "surge of fresh viewpoints" or a movement or a "wave" is not only incorrect, but reprehensible.

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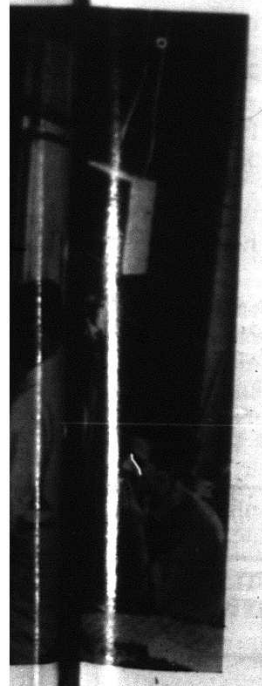
Mr. Bachmann claims that these films not only represent new methods of film-making, but also new ways of producing and financing films outside the industry—that these films "are breaking most of the established axioms". This, of course, is nonsense. Independent productions have always existed outside of the industry structure. Stanley Kubrick's first two films (*Killer's Kiss; Fear and Desire*) were independently financed as was Bradley's *Julius Cesar* . . . both were made by young Americans, both were first efforts, both were made ten years ago.

→

...T MAKE A WAVE...

What really puts the lie to Mr. Bachmann's thesis is his inclusion of Morris Engels' *Weddings and Babies*. Engels has been making and financing films (*The Little Fugitive, Lovers and Lollipops)* similar to this one for the past 12 years. In other words, all this is nothing new.

Having succeeded in eliminating the first word of the phrase, we turn to the second. What constitutes a "wave"? Something in common, a cohesive spirit, a common thematic proclivity? Mr. Bachmann states that these films "deal thematically with everyday people in everyday situations, heightened perhaps by abstraction and stylization". The unbelievable vagueness of this statement stems directly from the attempt to draw a common element from a group of works that are totally unrelated. Mr. Bachmann goes on to list four traits that these young American film-makers have in common: "They believe in film as a form of personal expression" (So do Welles, Dreyer, Bresson, Antonioni, Ray (S. & N.) and Sam Fuller . . . so what?) "They are interested in making films first, money second." Frankly, I doubt it. "They are involved people" and "They have a rational approach to the film making process." These last two are a bit thick. Mr. Bachmann does not support one of them with an example, simply because to do so would immediately place the film mentioned in conflict with one of the other titles. These statements are perfect examples of pure generalities, forced



Top left: PULL MY DAISY.

Left: THE CONNECTION.

Above: SHADOWS

And right, the film which "puts the lie to Mr. Bachmann's thesis". LOVERS AND LOLLIPOPS.

into existence by the disparate elements of the materials under discussion.

Now all the preceding might seem like so much semantic shilly-shallying. If Mr. Bachmann wants to say that these individual efforts, separately conceived and executed from some type of thematic—economic breaking down of barriers, if he wants us to believe that these isolated individuals share certain attitudes towards film-making, and, if as a handy label, he wants to call this a "new wave", why should there be any objection? All this publicity conceivably might be quite helpful to these young film-makers, a few of whom really need and deserve support.

My particular set of objections rests on two levels. Firstly, I dislike deceit, intensely, even in a good cause (and I'm a far way from being convinced that *all* these films deserve support; some are quite bad.) Also, as a subdivision of this objection, by grouping the good with the bad, reflections are immdiately cast on the quality of the other films. But my major objection is the constant comparison between the American "new wave" and the *real* New Wave from France. Statements have been made that there exists no such thing as a Nouvelle Vague (and the last issue of *Variety* considered even what did exist as being "history".) Mr. Bachmann has seized upon this denigration of the French film-makers to grant that his movement, like theirs, is a bit disorganized, not really cohesive. This is where the use of the word reprehensible becomes justified and strengthed into the phrase dangerously reprehensible for by comparing the nebulous, dis-related activities in this country with the powerfully sessile, co-joined efforts of the young French film-makers, both groups are hurt. First, where is our *Four Hundred Blows*, our *Les Cousins*, our *Breathless*, our *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*? (Even if Shirley Clarke's *The Connection* is as good as Mr. Bachmann says it is, one film does not make a movement.) Secondly, through this devious comparison we are given the impression that the French efforts like the American, are disorganized and non-related.

Nothing could be further from the truth, but, because of certain Bachmann-like European press agents, definitions of what we mean by the French New Wave must be posited since recently every film made in France by someone under 25 has been called "new wave". Actually the core of the real movement, the actual movement itself, consists of the following directors: Astruc, Chabrol, Rohmer, Resnais, Franju, Rivette, Godard, Truffaut and Daniol-Valcroze. They have all directed at least one film, many have done two and a few have completed three or four (I am speaking of features, of course. They all have several shorts and documentaries to their credit.)

They have in common the fact that almost all of them have been or are associated with the publication *Cahiers du Cinema*, either as writers or members of The Council of Ten. They know each other personally and have worked on each others films as producers, script-writers, scenarists. (Truffaut wrote the scenario for *Breathless*; Chabrol produced De-Broca's *The Love Game*.) They have helped each other (the more successful aiding those just starting) to secure financing, publicity and distribution. (Truffaut has been especially active in this regard.) Incidentally, the majority of them have made their films well within the recognized structure of the French film industry and hardly represent a departure in the methods of financing new films (The French have truly solved the problem of financing . . . they make good films.)

They are bound together by many things, but mostly by their common *critically developed* viewpoint towards film. They may disagree on certain points, but they all take their point of departure from a commonly developed analytical system ("Les Politiques des Auteurs".) Their works are truly a New Wave for they represent a new way of approaching film-making, perhaps even a new esthetic. We have only seen a fraction of their films, but I am confident that when we are exposed to the full force of their works it will become obvious that they have found the direction which the modern cinema will have to follow.

Obviously, the amorphous collection of American film promoted by Mr. Bachmann as a "new wave" in no way corresponds to the vitality, creativeness, the very reality of the Nouvelle Vague. Unfortunately there is no new wave. It would be nice if I could share Mr. Bachmann's enthusiasm for the scattering of films that have been made, for I would truly like to see a movement in this country similar to the one in France. But his indiscriminate grouping together of films, some good, mostly bad . . . films that exist in isolation from one another . . . each film being a separate entity, not depending on any common force for its existence . . . does not represent either a new direction for our cinema or a new creative method.

Every year there are several films made outside of the industry, strange films that do not conform to the usual pattern. They are interesting and one or two *are* "significant", but we cannot wish him luck in his public relations campaign for he might well be doing more harm than good.

The first of R. M. Franchi's regular contributions to MOTION will appear in our next issue.

ALSO in MOTION 3: FOCUS ON "B" FILMS AND CO-FEATURES by the full MOTION staff.

...and MOTION reviews "THE CONNECTION"

A DOUBLE REVIEW OF A PRODUCT OF THE SO-CALLED AMERICAN "NEW WAVE"

MOST — though not all — directors, try to take their audience out of the cinema seats and to plant them solidly in the action of the film by creating a sense of reality on the screen. As a step forward from this basic idea, it seems logical to pretend that the audience is actually involved in the action, most usually by pretending it is one of the characters on the screen. Olivier tried this hesitantly in Richard III when he took the audience into his confidence, for example, by beckoning to the camera in an early monologue. In *The Savage Eye* the audience sees events through the eye of a jaded divorcee, mainly because her thoughts coming over in the form of a commentary, force us to interpret the visuals as she interprets them. In fact the subjective camera is always being used — most recently, say, at brief moments in Seth Holt's *A Taste of Fear* and Cacoyannis' *Our Last Spring*.

It needed no very great imagination to see that another way of dragging in audience participation is to pretend it is the camera or cameraman. This is what Shirley Clarke does in *The Connection*. Very few people will not know what the action of this film is about: a director and cameraman shoot a group of drug addicts who await their fix by the connection, "Cowboy". "Cowboy" arrives, administers the fix, and we watch the result. The film has been described as a fair presentation of the outlook of addicts. I have no wish to quibble with the theme of the film. What I do object to, however, is its gimmick ridden presentation— an abortion, and a lazy operation at that, of the film medium.

The idea is that by seeing the action through the eyes of a cameraman, we, the audience, are dragged into the action. The addicts are aware of the camera's presence: they talk to it, hide their faces from it, scowl at it, make pretty patterns on the screen for it (an outrageous piece of cheating, this, to get over a boring period in the action), and so on. Sometimes the film in the camera runs out, the camera pans rapidly round the room looking for something to shoot, jerks up and down as a special movement catches its eye, and so on. The consequence is that we are continually aware we are watching a film — i.e. the net result is the very opposite to the makers' intention, which was to draw us into the drama. This is reinforced when the pretence is not maintained: "hand-held" shots which are too steady to be hand-held, or at moments of bad continuity when the other camera in the scene simply disappears.

This intrusive emphasis of the artificiality of *The Connection* leads to another grave defect in the film. By making us aware of its fictitious technique (after all, the film was made by a professional crew, not the bungling amateurs it claims), the logical step is that our attention is concentrated on artificialities in acting and dialogue. The dialogue is stagey, and some of the acting (especially Warren Finnerty's as Leach) hammy.

There is, in addition, a crude, pretentious, piece of symbolism at the very end of the film, emphasised by framing, in which "Cowboy" is compared with the main electricity supply.

With the exception of William Whitebait (who had reservations) and Niel Hibbin (who hated it), *The Connection* has had a wholly unjustifiably hysterical reception by the critics. (How they whooped at the shot of a beetle climbing up a wall — it was done before in, I think, Dmytryk's *Warlock*). Maybe I am in a minority, but I should have thought the message would have come over better as a straight documentary or as a semi-documentary like *On the Bowery*, rather than as this pretence at reality carried out in the most "arty", dilettanteish, and gimmicky manner possible.

Of course, there is still room for development of the "subjective" camera But what is needed is retrenchment and a refinement of the devices already used in previous films. *The Connection* has served to show (if we didn't already know it) that no useful purpose is served by consciously letting an audience in on the technique (whether fictitious or not) of how a film is made, for if that's what we want then home-movies will suffice. If after nearly seventy years of motion pictures our sum technical experience were to add up to *The Connection*, then Eisenstein would be turning in his grave.

Ian Johnson

THE CONNECTION does not in the least aim to drag us into the action. The posturings and responses the "junkies" give to the two "film-makers" are deliberately shown to emphasise the artificiality of the film medium, to remind us that it is incapable of capturing true realism. A point of view must intrude even when film taken by hidden camera is edited; every camera angle suggests a directorial attitude, etc.

"The Connection" approach should not distract the audience, but win it over more completely. The film purports to be as objective and unfalsified as is at all

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

LETTERS

Love, Illusion, and Isolation ?

I ENJOYED reading Ian Jarvie's appraisal of "L'Avventura", which is the most lucid it has yet been my privilege to read. However, one point about Antonioni and his work I thought perhaps Mr. Jarvie did not bring out sufficiently — though he undoubtedly infers it — is the extraordinary appreciation Antonioni has of the limitations of emotional and psychological contact between human beings. The impossibility of knowing what a sophisticated person is thinking behind the mask of his or her outward appearance . . . The extreme rarity of the popular notion of complete friendship. He has obviously felt the isolation and part despair which comes to most introspective "thinking" people.

Nothing could illustrate this better than his latest film "La Notte" (which I saw in Paris), in which Antonioni reveals even more his attitude towards life and particularly other people. The central characters are a married couple — early thirtyish — wed about six years — disillusion setting in. He is a moderately successful writer becoming known (Marcello Mastroianni). She (Jeanne Moreau) only his wife and becoming slightly frustrated with her rôle as a social asset to his career. They have lost the togetherness of initial love. He finds her now almost sexually repulsive. Most of all they fail utterly to communicate.

They are both aware that they are falling apart, she more than him because she still desires him physically, but the only way they can communicate is by ordinary physical acts of kindness and by basically banal conversation. Or else by the sexual act — in which last desparing position, Antonioni uncompromisingly leaves them. The critic of "The Guardian" was so far mistaken as to treat this film as a conventional reconciliation-of-estranged-couple film. In his (or her) opinion in the esoteric final scene the lovers "find themselves again and salvage their love". On second thoughts it must have been a woman who wrote that, for few men would so easily put such a schoolgirlish romantic construction upon what is basically a pessimistic view of life expounded by Antonioni in this climactic scene. Love of the body is for this couple a temporary expedient only. A soporific which allows them a few moments forgetfulness of the emotional desert of their everyday lives. There is no hope, no regeneration of love in their desperate embrace, only the final recognition that each human being is a tight little world of his or her own, the penetration of which is possible only on the few occasions when its guard is emotionally down. The same is true of "Le Amiche" where the career girl rejects emotional contact with the man she is attracted to as too uncertain and violent a substitute for the more mundane but "safe" satisfactions of the dress designing business.

In "L'Avventura", too, Claudia thinks she has found emotional and mental rapport with Sandro (it is a feature of most of Antonioni's films that he seems to see things more clearly from a woman's point of view). But what has she found? Nothing! That is the tragedy of the scene when she finds Sandro with the starlet: not merely the act of physical betrayal, but the horrific impact of the realisation that there is nothing very special about her relationship with Sandro. Love is nothing special in itself: mere romanticising and seeking refuge from the basic human predicament of isolation in complete submission to another human being. Claudia therefore forgives Sandro his weakness and Sandro therefore weeps in the parallel recognition of the hopelessness of "romantic love".

Love is an illusion, says Antonioni. He is obsessed with finding out about it (as Ian Jarvie so rightly emphasises) but he can come to only one conclusion: "love" should be reserved for the physical act. The popular conception of the word adds little if anything to the human relationship. Otherwise "We can still but be good friends".

'La Notte" is incidentally another masterpiece, though less beautiful than the peerless "L'Avventura". Monica Vitti intrudes again — brunette this time — as a young socialite whose optimism and "innocence" captivate the writer. The direction is as loose and imaginative as "L'Avventura", though the symbolism is more obvious and strained, viz. the guilt scene in the latter film with Claudia surrounded by staring men. There is still that incredible insight into what people are saying with their eyes, their faces, their whole bodies. Never have I come away from a picture as I did from "L'Avventura" knowing so much about the characters involved. As Ian Jarvie says: "He is utterly wrapped up in trying to get inside people; to expose the workings of their minds, to, map the mental geography of, and between, people."

I suggest Mr. Jarvie rethinks his title to "Love, Illusion, and Isolation".

46 Edensor Road, Keighley, Yorks. **A. Bromley**

(The title to Mr. Jarvie's article was an editorial one, and not his own.)

KEEP UP the "B" picture coverage. Besides those you mention how about an article on Boetticher? "Ride Lonesome" and "Buchanan Rides Alone" are small masterpieces and both much better than the recent "Comanche Station". By the way was the Western in "Un Bout de Souffle"—"Westbound"—a joke? tribute? coincidence?

Glasgow, W.2 **A. F. F.**

BOOKSHELF

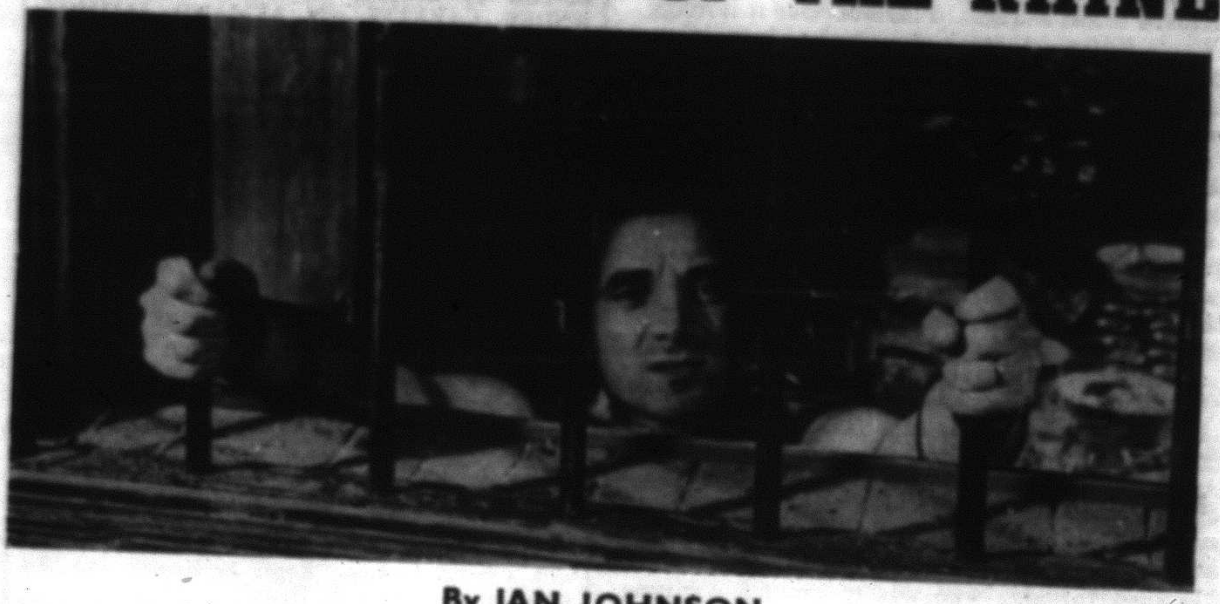
"LA DOLCE VITA", with an introduction by Lo Duca (Rodney Book Service), 52s. post free.

WITHOUT doubt this book is of use primarily to those who have seen Fellini's film, and can therefore appreciate Lo Duca's captions, which are frequently incisive and thoughtful, to the full. There are 220 stills, and these vary a good deal in quality, many of them being hazy to a degree that does not strike one during a performance of the film. But the close-ups are particularly good, and stress how important they are in Fellini's technique (the close-ups of Nadia during the closing strip-tease sequence, for instance).

The one really satisfactory element of the book is that it is a comprehensive record of the film. Every scene is shown at least a handful of photographs while others, such as the Anita Ekberg episode, receive exhaustive treatment. Occasionally short and generally piquant extracts from the dialogue are added, and this particularly useful in the scene where Marcello's father accompanies his son to a night-club "just to see what it's like".

The book is expensive, but it is probably worth fifty shillings to those who believe that **La Dolce Vita** is a great and memorable film. **P. C.**

THE CROSSING OF THE RHINE



By IAN JOHNSON

So *Rocco* didn't get the Golden Lion at last-year's Venice Festival. Too bad, for it undoubtedly deserved it. It is doubly unfortunate, too, for disappointment at the Jury's decision has led many critics, and therefore the public-at-large, to all but ignore the actual winner, *Le Passage du Rhin*.

This is a pity. The war-film has never yet produced very great art, and *Le Passage du* Rhin is not one of the best examples of the genre, yet for both actors and, especially, for director Andre Cayatte, it is a "tour de force". True, the most obvious directorial effects are sledgehammered (and this is what many critics found objectionable), yet in many ways the direction is also extremely subtle, even going so far as to create a relationship not overtly expressed by the actors.

The story uses the familiar device of showing us the lives of two men, who meet for a brief period. Alternations of scenes then force us to draw inevitable conclusions about the two. The one a pastry-cook, the other a journalist, are taken prisoners by the Germans and sent to work in a German farming district. The journalist escapes to join the Free French in England and become, first, a war-hero, and then newspaper editor. The pastry-cook refuses to betray the kindness of the German family with whom he lives, is "liberated" at the end of the war, and then — with the aid of the journalist — decides to return to the German farm.

The theme is "freedom", and the film deliberately sets out to destroy conventional ideas on he subject. The credits open on a barred, pavement-level window which we at first think is a prison; it is the home of the pastry-cook Roger (Charles Aznavour). He approaches the bars, grips them as a prisoner grips the bars of his cell, and stares out at the newspaper-seller screaming the latest war-scare headlines. (This scene contrasts with the very final in the film where it is Jean, the journalist, peering through and gripping the wires of a frontier gate, who has lost his "freedom".)

To Roger, in these opening scenes, home is a prison — although he doesn't realise it. Like a warder, his mother-in-law beats upon the trap-door in the ceiling, demanding and bullying for more cakes to be sent up. His wife is completely dominated by her mother, a point which Cayatte makes swiftly and bluntly: when Roger peers upwards through the trap-door and enquires after his wife Alice, he receives the curt reply: "She's working in the shop"; the trap-door slams down, Roger is plunged into the darkness at the head of the stairs, and the scene fades. The next and conclusive pointer comes in an almost childishly simple bedroom scene between Roger and his wife. Interrupting a shy love-making, the mother blusters into the room with cigarettes — not for Roger, who doesn't smoke, but for his sergeant — declaring that Roger will not recognise his wife when he returns. Hardship, declares the mother breeds "character", as it did for her in the last war. With a cautionary warning for the "children" to "be good", which the daughter obeys faithfully, she departs. Like mother, like daughter.

As a prisoner, Roger receives a letter from his wife. It discusses the business: little is mentioned of Roger or asked after him: "we must cash in

while we can". Jean comments on the letter, "you can't deny it, friend, they miss us." The remark seems sincere; to the audience it is ironic. When Roger returns home at the close of the war and finds his wife has now almost completely filled his dead mother-in-law's position, he decides to escape back.

Superficially Jean (Georges Riviere) is the complete screen hero: brave, heroic, and amorous. It is he who escapes from Germany, who becomes a war hero fighting for the Free French, who becomes the editor through a vote of popularity. Unlike Roger, who goes to war mainly because his father- and mother-in-law suggest he should, it is he who gives up the chance of a better job in his boast to fight for freedom. Yet once the superficialities are stripped away, he is seen as a hard, superficial, braggart with the morals and idealism of a stupid adolescent.

MAIN DRIVING FORCE

He finds his main driving force in the word "freedom". His second conversation is with Delmas, the man who was to become war-time editor, siding with the Nazis. "Freedom", he says, "is worth fighting for". "Who will fight for it?" asks Delmas, "Those who don't like getting kicked around", comes the reply. It is the most explicit definition Jean ever gives of his conception of "freedom". He turns down the post of Managing Editor with the words, "I never regret anything", the words of a braggart. When he returns to Paris after escaping from Germany he enters Florence, his mistress's, flat while she is out. When she returns he has his back turned to her, swilling a drink in a glass and looking at a painting, while he makes the melodramatic remark, "An original I see". "Yes," he says, as he turns and approaches her, "they all come back, even me." She accuses him — correctly — of being a braggart. His heroics are schoolboy-heroics, and his true position is revealed in an earlier scene where he declares that whatever his political approval of going to war, "I want to see how I'll act under fire — that's all — but it means something to a man" — an attitude which might have come straight out of a boy's comic.

Throughout the film he is striking a pose. When Delmas, who is sleeping with Florence, enters her flat after Jean has returned, Jean warns him: "Don't shut the door, one of us is leaving" — again melodramatic. "What an act you two put up," says Florence, and stung — the truth always hurts! — Jean hits her.

"Liberty, dear liberty" proclaim Jean's newspaper articles from London, while his first headline as editor is an eight-column banner: "Paris est Libre". Yet in the end Jean fails to achieve personal liberty. As Paris is liberated, he says to an old friend, "Freedom isn't when your doorbell rings at 6 a.m. and you know it's the milkman. Freedom is when the doorbell rings, and you know it's not the milkman, and you can still jump out of the window." Then comes the choice: either Jean marries Florence, the ex-mistress of the Gestapo chief, or resigns his editorship. Now he says, "At least you could jump out of the window when the Boches were here".

Despite its complex, inter-wined story, and episodic nature, the film is a closely-knit whole. The director allows nothing to detract from his central theme; this is a war-film which shows little of actual battle or conflict. The only battle scenes are those of the allied march to Paris and its liberation, and these are old newsreel shots. Even when the action encroaches to within a couple of miles of Roger's farm, it is seen from the house, at a distance.

What we are shown is the effect of war on the civilian population. The gradual wasting away of the manpower of a village, until only a prisoner-of-war is left capable of taking the position of mayor. The dreadful impact as first father, then young son, are taken away to the front as Germany becomes drained of its fighters; the sad deliveries of the news of death; refugees tramping along a road carrying their miserable

CREDITS

Directed by ANDRE CAYATTE, Screenplay by ANDRE CAYATTE and ARMAND JAMMOT. Dialogue by MAURICE AUBERGE. Director of photography, ROGER FELLOUS. Art director, CLAVEL. Music, LOUIGUY. A Franco-London-Les-Films-Gibe-UFA Production, Franco-German. Distributed by Mondial. 125 minutes. Cert. X.
Roger, CHARLES AZNAVOUR. Jean, GEORGES RIVIERE. Florence, NICOLE COURCEL. Helga, CORDULA TRANTOW. Roger's father-in-law, GEORGES CHAMARAT. Roger's wife, BETTY SCHNEIDER.

ANDRE CAYATTE

Author of several novels ("Le Traquenard", "Les Marchands d'Ombres") before the war André Cayatte wrote film scripts and screen-plays.

He adopted "Remorgue" and "Montmartre sur Seine" for filming and conceived the theme for "Couple Ideal", which was directed by Bernard Roland.

Since he took up direction in 1942 Cayatte has made "La Fausse Maitraisse" with Daniele Darrieux, "Pierre et Jean" from Maupassant, "Au Bonheur des Dames" from Zola, "Le Dernir Sou" with Ginette Leclere, "Roger la Honte" and "La Revanche de Roger la Honte".

He directed Tino Rossi in "Serenade aux Dessoux des Cartes" and "Les Amants de Verone" from the screen-play by Jacques Prevert.

Other films by Cayatte are:

"Justice est Faite" (Grande Prix, Venice 1950), "Nous Sommes tous des Assassins' (Cannes Special Jury Prize, 1952), "Avant le Deluge" (1953), "Le Dossier Noir" (1955), "Oeil pour Oeil" (1957), "The Mirror has Two Faces" (1958), "Le Passage du Rhin" (Golden Lion, Venice 1960).

possessions — a familiar screen image. Jean is never shown fighting for the Freedom Fighters: instead news of his rise to influence is superimposed on a shot of a bombed-out London church. Likewise we never see Roger or Jean fighting: we see their preparations to set out for war, and the intermediate stage leading to their capture is omitted.

ROGER AND HELGA

In broad view *Le Passage du Rhin* is remarkably compact and compressed. Yet in detail, Cayatte reveals a complete mastery of technique.

One of the most subtle aspects of this film is the way in which a relationship is developed between Roger and Helga, the daughter of the German farmer (Cordula Trantow), by the director, rather than by any effort of the actors. This is achieved by a series of scenes and incidents, most of them insignificant in themselves, but which add up to an important relationship, which however, is never really resolved until Roger returns at the very end of the film.

When Roger first joins the German family, he sits himself some way from the rest of the family at the end of a long table. The father indicates to the son, Friedrich, to pass a drink to Roger. The son does so, deliberately swooping the cup across the table and spilling the liquid on Roger. The father, outraged, takes the son outside. There is an embarassed silence, while Roger uncomfortably sets the cup up again. Then Helga wipes up the mess, and quietly the camera zooms partially inwards until Helga and Roger fill the frame.

The second occasion is when Roger first travels out with Helga and Kurt, the farm-hand, on the potato lorry. Seated on the back, Roger drops a sack over the side for one of his fellow-prisoners. In order to conceal the loss, Helga sets about filling an empty sack from the others. Sitting by her side Roger helps her. Then Roger starts to laugh and Helga joins in. The scene is a progression from a long shot of the two sitting on the lorry, to a series of close-ups of the pair looking into each other's face. Yet, by a clever directorial trick, although equal prominence is given to each alternating close-up, the scene is taken from Helga's point of view, examining the French stranger sitting at her side. This is achieved by the sound-track, which dims and muffles Roger's laughter, whilst allowing Helga's to come through sharply and loudly. This detaches us from Roger and associates our emotions with those of Helga. It is as if *we* are laughing. Throughout the film Cayatte's use of sound and music is masterly.

With the intrusion of Jean upon the scene and its sequel resulting in Helga's dispatch to the city, the relationship between Roger and Helga is left in abeyance. Her return is emphasised by a startling scene, impressive visually and aurally. While Roger threshes in the fields, there appears high on the hill a tiny figure against a background of richly clouded sky and a full-blooded musical score. It is Helga, who makes her way past Roger and round the bend to the house: not a word is spoken as she passes. The scene is almost certainly one of those which *S. & S.'s* anonymous "hatchet-man" labelled as "inflated, posturing", yet I believe this opinion is merely a pseudo-sophisticated afterthought. At the time, the scene is most impressive, and cinematic in the extreme. That it is perhaps reminiscent of, say *Gone with the Wind*, is immaterial. Furthermore, it is of vital importance in pinpointing the relationship between Helga and Roger.

Two other scenes heighten this relationship: in the writing they may seem somewhat sentimental, on the screen they are quietly effective. When the son, Friedrich, is sent to the front, mother and daughter embrace, weeping. Helga drops a handkerchief, and Roger moves across the frame. The camera zooms downwards to the ground, and follows his hand as he picks it up and gives it to her. A quiet scene, in which nothing is said but which rivets the spectator's attention.

When the mother dies, only Helga and Roger are left in the house. A gentle relationship is hinted at: in one stark scene, black and grey and white (as the armies close in, the dismal oppressiveness of the final scenes is heightened by the film's black and white), by the dead mother's grave with the cross silhouetted against the sky, we hear the engines of a plane overhead, and Roger shelters Helga with his arm. As he does so the importance of the action is emphasised by the sound-track, this time by a gentle, and sad, music.

DEPARTURE SCENE

The final departure scene from Helga soon follows. As Roger is reluctantly taken away from the house there is a medium close-up of Helga. Her face registers no emotion. An unobtrusive cut to a slightly different camera position follows, and she advances until her face fills the whole frame; again registering no emotion. This enables the spectator to read what he likes into it. Throughout, the relationship between Helga and Roger is quietly stressed, yet left ambiguous. It seems probable that Helga will accept Roger on his return.

Between Helga and Jean, on the other hand, the relationship could not be more overt. Jean determines to use Helga for his escape, a decision which results in a betrayal of Helga's love for Jean, and her humiliation. The relationship is purely sexual. Helga encourages Jean on his own plane, while her relationship with Roger is on his plane; in a way, therefore, she also reflects the characters of the two men.

The trusting hope of Helga and the hypocrisy of Jean result in a relationship which is slightly obscene. This is conveyed not only by the brilliant acting performances, but also by the director. The key scene opens with "beautiful" shots of nature; thunder clouds roll, trees bend back in the wind, and rain sweeps back and forth across a lake. This cuts to a picturesque scene of a horse and cart drawing Jean and Helga up to a stable. Roger is standing on a balcony watching, and Jean takes the horse into the stable. So far, all is innocence. Roger dresses down the horse, and Jean enters. The first sense of uneasiness — the whole of the rest of the scene is uneasy and forbidding — is indicated by an awkward camera angle as Jean talks to Roger of escaping. The camera peers over a stall, and as Jean talks to Roger, Roger has his back to Jean. Helga enters with sugar for the horse, and playfully rubs Jean's back with straw. We can see that Jean, facing the camera, is annoyed, but Helga delightedly caries on. Our sense of discomfort is maintained by the knowledge that Roger is watching from behind the horse he attends — he is shown in two intercut shots during the following action, peering round, then looking away embarassed. (The illicit nature of the relationship is stressed too in the final scene between Helga and Jean when they are watched by Kurt in a reflecting lorry bonnet). Helga attempts to give the horse sugar, is chased by Jean, and when Jean neighs like a horse, gives him a cube of sugar. Jean crunches the sugar, his face in close-up. By a deliberate amplification of the sound of his crunching, this action is given a somewhat obscene overtone, and stresses the basic crudity of Jean's character. Roger, embarrassed, half-walks, half-runs, from the stable. Then Jean kisses Helga, the camera zooms in to a close-up of his hand which strokes Helga's naked arm from shoulder to hand, which he opens and from which he removes two remaining cubes of sugar. The whole scene is a foreshadowing of the later one, where Jean escapes. Helga gives, Jean takes, and he takes from her more than she gives.

THE SOUND-TRACK

The final humiliation of Helga takes place, quietly, in the woods. Having staged a breakdown with the lorry, Jean is left with the girl while Kurt takes a long journey back to the garage to fetch help. Jean takes Helga into the woods, presses her against a tree, and already when she murmers: "Ich liebe dich. Je t'aime, je t'aime", and he stops her mouth, the humiliation has set in. He talks of his plans for escape. Would you run for help? he asks in French. "Ja", she says, not understanding. Helga is being used, and for the spectator the process is acutely disturbing. Later, further down in the woods, she offers herself to him completely. In return she is stripped, and left naked to her own betrayal, and the Gestapo, while Jean escapes.

As in most Cayatte films, the use of music and the sound-track in *Le Passage du Rhin*, in extremely skilful. The prison-motif is reinforced by a heavy rhythm, as in the opening credit shots of the rooftops when Jean returns from escaping. The director's strong sympathy for Helga is expressed by a melody: in the seduction scene, for example, to be replaced by a discord when her dress is finally ripped away, or when Roger places his arm about her by her mother's grave. Our attention is rivetted to Helga's return from the city by music, and at the end of the film there is a perfectly-timed pause before the final credits and heavy crash of sound, which gives us time to realise the significance of Florence's final words, the final words of the film: "Adieu Jean, Adieu my darling. I've left you the most precious thing you have: your freedom." There is too, for example, a touching scene where Roger arrives with the mayor to inform a wife of her husband's death, while her children play happily with a French prisoner. While the news is being broken, and Roger waits outside, Jean arrives and asks Roger to escape with him. Roger refuses, and his refusal comes against a background of birds singing, chickens cackling, and the children crying on the news of their father's death: perfect expressions of Roger's reasons for staying, and the internationalist angling of the film.

PRIMARY THEME: LIBERTY

The primary theme of the film is "liberty", but it is a term never explicitly defined, and which to different people means different things. To Florence, liberty is money: "I want to make money — and quickly. If I find a man who has what I want I shall be satisfied, but if you were that man, I would be happy, very happy", a philosophy witch leads to her bedding down with a Gestapo chief, and finally to fear and unhappiness: "I'm thirty-two and afraid, afraid of being thirty-five, forty, — and poor. If you left the newspaper it would be because of me — so I'm leaving you. Adieu Jean" (though she still hopes he will fetch her back from the station).

Roger, only, finds real liberty, by returning to Germany where he was needed: "Out there I felt I was useful — here I'm a different man." But Jean? And here lies the crux, and one of the weaknesses, of the film. Jean desires liberty: from the first moment we see him, until the end of the film when the director rams home the fact he has not found it, he reiterates his demand. But what is the liberty Jean has lost? The film forces us to work it out for ourselves; but the issues are none too clear. Presumably Jean found his liberty in nationalism, fighting for his country (while Roger found it in "internationalism"), and relinquished his right when he persisted in

marrying the former mistress of a Gestapo chief. Yet if this is the message, it would have been clearer, (though less ironic), had Jean actually married Florence in the end, instead of parting from her. Furthermore, Cayatte cheats by making the character who pushes his "greater-Europe" line sympathetic, and the other unsympathetic.

All the same, in the period of the Common Market, Cayatte's idea of liberty, the liberty which breaks down frontiers, is expressly and urgently modern (incidentally reinforced by paintings and newsreel shots of De Gaulle). Also, his sympathies seem to lie with people, rather than with governments and those who run our lives — a far more comprehensible idea of internationalism. Hence it is his Helga and Roger who, presumably, find a kind of happiness, while for Florence and Jean there is only misery.

Le Passage du Rhin is not a great film, but it is a worthwhile one. Its magnitude of theme, the perfection of its acting performances, its sense of period, and the perfection and attention to detail in the individual scene, make it deserving of attention. There is much that I have not mentioned: tiny details abound. To take a single example, at one stage Jean climbs through a bedroom window, and both we and Jean are uncertain as to what he will do next. As if to express this, the camera jerks slightly to the left, then, as if realising its mistake, quickly jerks back as Jean moves to the right. Or when we hear Delmas has committed suicide, a sudden drop of the camera gives a sag to our emotions too.

Yet it is not a wholly satisfying film. For one thing there are several minor loose ends (for example, how did Jean know how to make the lorry have a breakdown?) There is, too, the intrusion of the stock character of a bullying coward of a German officer. And sometimes Cayatte takes his angles and imagery too far: at the death of Helga's mother, for example, a shot of the mother's face in heavy shadows in close-up with Helga standing awkwardly behind, is sheer posturising. And while, as a whole, the film is beautifully self-contained and balanced, the transition from Germany to France and back again is sometimes awkward.

Nevertheless, at a time when critics tend to lose their heads at many half-baked attempts, it is worth seeing what a real director can do, in confident control of all the faces of his chosen medium: theme, camera, editing, music, and actors — in fact the whole mysterious art of "mise-en-scène".

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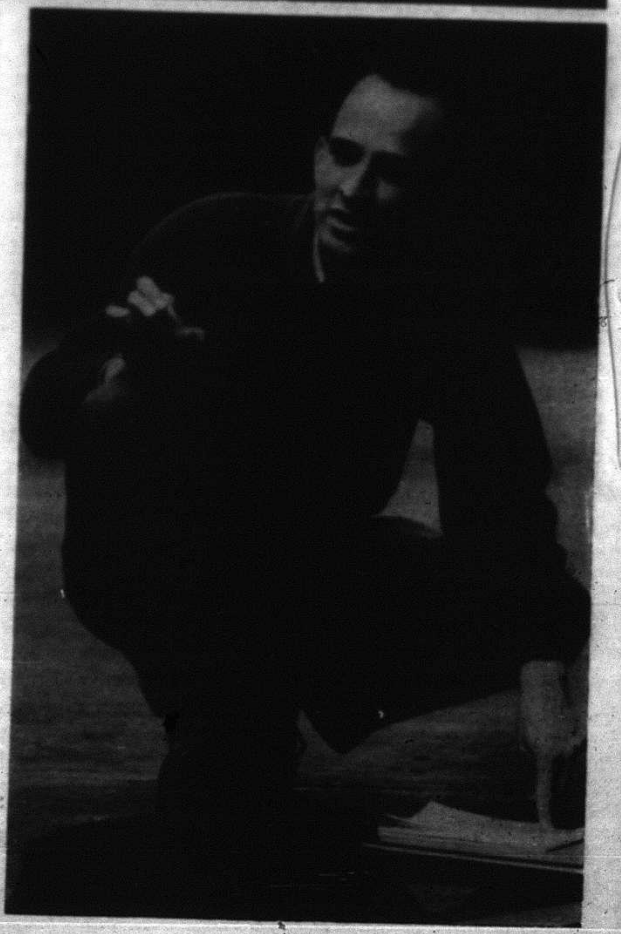

WIDER STILL

CINEMASCOPE, like sound in the late twenties, was introduced by businessmen rather than by artists, who were not consulted. The first films were hastily made and achieved their object of dragging people away from their television sets, of making money. Artistically, most were worthless, and many critics condemned Cinemascope as they had condemned sound: the old square screen (proportions 1 : 1.33) was the 'pure' cinema and to widen it was to destroy the cinema as an autonomous art, to put it on par with theatre or circus. But now such English-speaking films as are not shot in a specific widescreen process are still considerably wider than before, usually 1:1.6. Very few films anywhere in the world are made in the old proportions. After six years this widening of the screen has — like sound — been tacitly accepted as a logical development in the art of the film, or, if it hasn't, it ought to be.

English critics, in their predictable shortsightedness, were against the use of Cinemascope for all but the most spectacular subjects. It was easy to ridicule comments by men like Darryl Zanuck ("Here was Lauren Bacall on a couch — she filled the screen! She was 64 ft long and in colour!")

Two articles in *Sight and Sound* made the obvious elementary points which still apply. An incompetent director will find it difficult to fill the screen with significant material; he will also, because of the similarity between stage and Cinemascope proportions, be tempted to line up actors in front of the camera and let them act out a scene theatrically. But a bad director will always make bad films. Only in France were critics ahead of film-makers in foreseeing the artistic advantages. I do not want to trace the history of the various widescreen processes, anamorphic or otherwise, but to show what needs this expansion of the screen has filled and what new problems it presents. Most of the purely technical difficulties such as screen-edge definition and colour reproduction have now been overcome (one ridiculous long-term result, though, is that many exhibitors still show films made in the old proportions in 'panoramic' versions, thus cutting off tops and tails, and often subtitles as well; the only possible remedy for which is complain, complain, complain. That's how they got it stopped in France).

The most important advance in talking films has been the development of Composition in depth, associated mainly with Welles and Renoir. Welles could not have made *Citizen Kane* as he did without the extraordinary technical skill of his cameraman, Gregg Toland, but the novelty of his film is far from being a purely technical one, as the phrase deep-focus photography might imply: he built up scenes of great density, with groups of people at varying distances from the camera, instead of using the traditional device of montage which cuts a scene into a series of different shots and thus sacrifices its spatio-temporal continuity. For instance there is the scene where Kane's parents sign the contract which will send him away from home, while through the window the boy himself plays unsuspecting in the snow: it is obvious how much this gains from being taken in a single shot, the parents close to the camera, the boy a tiny figure in the background, instead of being broken into cross-cuts. Again, take the attempted suicide of Kane's second wife, told in one shot: in the foreground the empty glass; in the background, Kane knocking at the door, then entering and staring; between, his wife lying on the bed, gasping for breath. As André Bazin points out this is not the negation of montage but the integration of montage into the shot, and it is no less cinematic, for it retains all the associative powers of montage, and is equally an interpretation of reality by the director.

Even more relevant are William Wyler's compositions in *The Best Years of our Lives*, made five years later. He used very long takes and expressed interplay of character by the way people moved and behaved and aligned themselves within the shot (these points are very fully analysed by Bazin in chapters 17 and 18 of *Qu'est-ce que le Cinéma?*, Volume 1).

Composition in depth was a development away from the extreme form of montage which built up sequences from a series of independent shots, "creating reality" by juxtaposition of images. Insofar as there are any Schools of cinema they consist of the followers of Lumiere and Meliés respectively: Lumiere, who first recorded events in their wholeness, Meliés, who first constructed events for the screen with trick photography. The Russian theorists used montage as a similar kind of trick, as in Kuleshov's famous experiments

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L AND WIDER

with neutral close-ups of an actor (face + soup = hunger, face + child = joy, face + coffin = grief), and with "creative geography": "By the process of junction of pieces of celluloid appeared a new, filmic space without existence in reality".

Although editing is an indispensable part of the cinema there is no doubt that to create a performance or a place in this way is undesirable for a director purporting to show an individual in his relationship with other people and with his environment.

Cinemascope is the most recent step in the direction of literal *integrity*, i.e. wholeness, and goes naturally with the use of real locations, composition in depth, and of actors who live and understand their parts. It is not surprising that *Cahiers du Cinéma*, the champion of Lumiere, welcomed Cinemascope for the particular reason that "it does not impose upon us, in a series of shots, a universe which does not exist in reality".

The wider the screen, the more difficult it is to fake a performance or a scene. It is difficult to chop up actions into fragments small enough to make possible a "performance" like Bobby Henrey's in *The Fallen Idol*, where Carol Reed patiently obtained gestures, expressions, movements from him in isolation and then pieced them together, cutting them in with other shots — a synthetic performance, in every way. Victor Mature does not like horses so in a cowboy film he traditionally has his performance made up from close ups, long shots of his double, and clever cutting; this would seem even clumsier on a wide screen, where fake actions and backgrounds, not to mention fake emotion, are more obvious simply because there is a greater area of screen to fill. Depth, integrity, openess: all these formal qualities characteristic of the modern cinema are moral qualities also, the openess of the Cinemascope format serving as a test of sincerity.

Because simple cross-cutting in a dialogue scene is clumsier on a wider screen, the director cannot take the easy way out and direct the lines one by one; the actors will have to play the scene together within the decor: if the decor is inappropriate or the acting perfunctory it is bound to show in the film. *Spinster* is a good example of the spurious film, with unimaginative sets, acting and direction, just a routine assignment for everyone; they might have got away with it on the old-size screen, but here the result is static and boring, and one understands Bazin's forecast that a bad Cinemascope film would be 2½ times as bad as a bad square one. Similarly, the basic phoniness of *Spartacus* and *Exodus* cannot survive the searching scrutiny of the long-held shot at crucial moments.

It is exactly this open quality of the Cinemascope screen that directors like Welles, Wyler and Antonioni have been anticipating. They found their own ways of achieving the density of meaning that a single Cinemascope shot can give more naturally: by composition in depth, by concentrated decor, by long tracking shots. In *Le Amiche* Antonioni places his characters in their environment by long twirling camera movements of incredible virtuosity, never isolating them for a moment from this environment nor from each other. As a result the frame is constantly crowded, the atmosphere stifling; he cannot afford to leave any empty spaces. In *Le Amiche* itself this is not a disadvantage, for it is a film about frustration and it is just this impression of the stifling impingement of society women on each other's lives that Antonioni needs to convey. It is noticeable, anyway, how much more flexibility the wider screen (1:1.85) of *L'Avventura* allows. It is the perfect illustration of Maurice Schérer's comment "Cinemascope at last introduces into our art the one element which it lacked: air, the divine ether of the poets".

The wider the screen the more naturally can dramatic use be made of environment; a given set-up or camera movement will integrate character and decor more fully. In *Home from the Hill* Minnelli uses the decor to illuminate the relationship between father and son without having to resort to stylisation. He simply shows Robert Mitchum sitting in his room, in a solid leather chair, surrounded by his dogs and hunting trophies, and the influence of all this on his son is sufficiently emphasised by a slow pan round the room, keeping Mitchum himself in the frame. Later, George Hamilton is shown in his own room: "the influence Theron's mother at first exerts on her son is clear from a glance at his room: toy soldier, butterflies in cases and geological specimens cover the walls; a telescope stands by the fireplace. Without a word spoken,

CHARLES BARR

the past few years of the boy's life have been drawn in" (Mark Shivas).

On a narrower screen a director can only make this kind of connexion by cutting (e.g. shot of boy, shot of telescope, shot of boy, shot of toy soldiers), by stylisation of sets, as in *Citizen Kane* or the German expressionist films; or by obtrusive camera movement, like the fast pan through the saloon that opens *Elmer Gantry*, going from a close-up of a crib past a bottle of whisky, a tart, a barman, to reveal Gantry amid a group of drunken salesmen. This is extremely effective, and Brooks has deliberately chosen to work in this style; the point is that in the 1 : 1.6 format, the movement still has to be obtrusive, whereas in Cinemascope both styles are possible.

At this stage it is worth examining one of the few reasoned criticisms to have been made of Cinemascope. Marcel Martin, in *Le Langage Cinématographique* (1955) claims (1) that lateral composition will supercede composition in depth and that films will thus once more become theatrical, the cinema having achieved autonomy as an art only when it began to operate around the longitudinal axis; (2) that the close-up is impracticable and there can therefore be no detachment from the world of things, no 'interior' drama; (3) that we are too conscious of the physical size of the screen, we watch a show rather than participate in a work of art. "Impression de realite peut-être, mais non realisme".

Perhaps the best answer to these criticisms is the work of certain directors who have proved how flexible the Cinemascope format is.

Nicholas Ray. The horizontal plane can be used, particularly on the wide screen, to express tranquility, joy or freedom. *The Savage Innocents*, which contrasts the life of the Eskimos with that of 'civilised' Europeans, is one long illustration of this.

The first ten minutes of *Rebel without a Cause* are played in a juvenile detention centre. Ray uses Cinemascope to relate the three delinquents spatially to each other; the offices where they are interviewed are glass-walled and exposed, and this lack of privacy, this emotional nakedness, is conveyed visually in a way which would be absolutely impossible on a smaller screen.

A shot of extraordinary beauty comes when Dean first looks out of his window at home and catches sight of Natalie Wood. Hitherto he has been pushed around by everyone, the tones of the film have been mostly dark, and there seems to be nothing bright or worthwhile in his life. In this shot Natalie Wood, wearing a green cardigan, moves against a background of green foliage, and the effect is enhanced by a smooth tracking shot from the side. On the old screen these two images could not possibly have had the weight they do here, where they give far more insight than any amount of the rather badly-written dialogue.

François Truffaut. *The 400 Blows and Shoot the Pianist* are essentially 'interior' films. In the former it is not only in the near-close-ups of Antoine talking to the psychologist that his inner conflict is brought out.

An exhilarating, ironic freedom is conveyed by the final long tracking shot as he runs down to the sea, after his escape; and in the scenes where he runs with his friends through the Paris streets. Conversely he seems imprisoned at school and at home. As usual the wide-screen emphasises the decor: Truffaut used a real flat, far smaller than any set that would be built in a studio, and in fact the pokiness, the construction of the flat, the physical proximity of his parents, are just as oppressive as they could have been on a narrow screen.

Shoot the Pianist has the same authentic settings and the same absolute command of tempo. Again, Truffaut shows how one can dispense with conventional close-ups; the final shot of Charlie at the piano, and the conversation, in flashback, between him and his wife, are as intimately revealing as any detached close-up could be. Dialogue scenes he usually shoots economically in two-shot, a sensible procedure on the widescreen where this is completely compatible with realism and far superior to the conventional cutting from face to face. All through the two films Truffaut uses the full resources of the modern cinema to combine exterior realism with psychological insight. It should be clear how naturally this follows on from, say, *Le Amiche* of which Antonioni said "I wanted to place my characters in their context, not to separate them, by montage, from their daily environment. You will find no crosscutting whatever in *Le Amiche*; this technique expresses nothing."

Don Siegel. *Flaming Star*, in which Elvis Presley plays a half-breed torn between loyalty to his family and loyalty to the invading Indians, is the number one Neglected Masterpiece of 1960, and has an astonishing richness of style:

— long lateral tracking shots which express brilliantly the father's attachment to the farm from which he fears he will be uprooted. Whenever he moves forward from the house the camera moves with him, placing him against the house, then the veranda, the garden, and the grazing land outside. Siegel never cuts straight from door to open-air.

— long-held group shots of the family inside the house, eating and singing together, the camera moving unobtrusively; the continuity of these scenes, made possible by the width of the frame, gives the home an almost tangible existence.

— composition in depth: when Presley decides to leave home, Siegel does not this time track with him but lets him ride away from the camera, keeping the father in near-close-up at the side of the screen.

— a number of slow, formalised tracking

shots and static (though never lifeless) compositions, including a marvellous series of close-ups at the mother's funeral; all of them part of a generally heightened style which, far more than the script does, achieves the affinity with Greek tragedy claimed by the producers.

Stanley Kubrick. Much of *Spartacus* is set in a prison where gladiators are trained. Kubrick conveys the feeling of imprisonment by using very strong vertical lines and leading the eyes to the centre of the screen; the camera too is constantly moving vertically. The dramatic climax is the visit of some Romans to the camp. Kubrick makes a geometrical contrast, suggesting the easy luxury of their lives by the horizontal plane, spreading the general and his family out across the screen and moving the camera laterally with them (compare the contrast in Otto Preminger's *Exodus* between the broad, would-be-epic sweep of the bulk of the film and the scenes where Sal Mineo is in danger: darkness at the screen edges, movement into the camera, hard vertical lines and abrupt vertical camera movements.).

The key mistake made by Martin and others is to assume the widening of the screen so as to approximate to our own field of vision is a bad thing because it makes the cinema *too* realistic and destroys the interpretative function of the director. I prefer to see it as the removal of an unnecessary and arbitrary restriction of the director's freedom. It is his job to suggest an interpretation of reality by focussing our attention as sharply or as diffusely as he needs; in real life when we look at a landscape we employ our whole field of vision, but, when we drive a car, only a narrow strip of it, and the good director will control our attention similarly by his mise-en-scène. The close-ups in *Flaming Star* are completely effective because the spectator automatically concentrates on the face and not on the sky and the branches which fill the rest of the frame; the fact that they are there is not an "embarrassment" for they are only noticed out of the corner of the eye, like an irrelevant object in real life.

Going back to the development of composition in depth: an important point is that this is a realistic device, in the useful sense of the word. The spectator, to quote Bazin again, does his own montage. The director suggests an interpretation of reality but does not impose this interpretation rigidly. The "ambiguité du réel" is preserved — and even more so on a wide screen, which adds composition in breadth to composition in depth.

Similarly with what one might call the sensual powers of the cinema. Ever since Lumiere sent audiences scattering by showing, head-on, a train drawing into a station, it has been possible to involve the spectator directly, almost physically, by visual means; for instance, a quick zoom will vividly convey shock and reinforce the more intellectual shock caused by the presence (one presumes) of something unexpected (this is simply the old point of form and content fitting one another). On the narrow screen the most memorable of such sensual effects are achieved longitudinally rather than laterally. I am thinking particularly of *Partie du Campagne* and the overwhelming nostalgia contained in the long held shot, taken from the stern of a boat, of rain on the water; in *The Best Years of Our Lives*, of the sight, from the plane cockpit, of the city towards which the three servicemen are returning; in *Brief Encounter*, the repeated tracking in to Celia Johnson's face, to express emotional tension.

The wider the screen, the easier it is to convey, also through images, speed, luxury, freedom, tranquility (see notes on directors). And, as I have suggested, the small-screen (longitudinal) effects just mentioned will be no less successful in Cinemascope; the width of the screen is no embarrassment when the attention is sharply concentrated on the face of Antoine at the end of *The 400 Blows*; on George Hamilton as he rushes panic stricken into close-up, having heard of his father's death (*Home from the Hill*); on Natalie Wood as the camera closes in on her in the detention centre (*Rebel without a Cause*). Indeed the movement forward into a landscape is even more effective because of the more realistic field of vision and consequent impression of relief (e.g. the series of shots from the car in *Shoot the Pianist*).

I am not suggesting that realism should be pushed to its extreme by the development of stereophonic sound, smellies, feelies, tasties... nor that every film should be made in the 1:2½ ratio. Ideally every director would choose the ratio to fit his intended style. The consistently intimate, compressed drama of *Elmer Gantry*, *Le Amiche* or *Pickpocket* is deliberate. But instead of regarding the narrower screen as normal and Cinemascope as an extension of it, why not count works such as these as widescreen films where the director has, for dramatic reasons, chosen not to use the full width? I would rather look at it that way, because every useful cinematic effect can be achieved on the wide screen, not excluding quick cutting, cross-cutting, or big close-ups, when dramatically necessary. The widening of the screen, at first condemned for submerging the director, in fact gives him, as the interpreter of reality, more responsibility than ever before. And if widescreen films continue to drag people away from their television sets (and Ray's *King of Kings*, Mann's *El Cid*, and Minnelli's *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* are all due in London soon), then everyone should be happy.

EDEN REVISITED

RAY CONNOLLY reassesses Kazan's 'East of Eden', recently revived

EIGHT year ago when *East of Eden* was made, the problems of neurotic adolescence were a relatively new departure in the American cinema. The "psychological" Western which in the last few years has transformed every flea-bitten gun-slinger into an introverted psycho-analyst, had not yet fully emerged, and the Freudian approach had been generally avoided by film makers with an eye to the box-office. Surprisingly, early criticisms of *East of Eden*, which was something of a pioneer in this form of "psychological" movie, were marred by a general tendency to compare it with Kazan's previous film *On the Waterfront* (James Dean versus Brando, etcetera), while some rather silly remarks were made about Paul Osborn's script dealing only with the latter half of Steinbeck's novel. When in 1955 shortly after *East of Eden* opened in London, James Dean was killed in a road accident, all hopes of serious criticism were at an end. The feature writers stepped in to create a rather unsavoury legend around the dead actor. A few weeks ago in response to "n" number of requests *East of Eden* was re-issued, and a chance for reappraisal afforded.

The plot is the biblical one of Cain (Cal) and Abel (Aaron). Aaron is the ideal son idolised by his father, while Cal (James Dean) is violent and suspicious, and jealous of his brother's place in his father's affections. The climax in the story comes when, rejected by his father, a vengeful Cal drags Aaron off to meet their mother, owner of a brothel in the next town. Aaron's illusions broken (he'd always been told that mother was an angel in heaven), he enlists into the army, presumably to be killed, while Cal is left to be finally united with his dying father.

Ominously enough it is in the opening shot that Freud's influence is first seen. As a background for the film's credit titles Kazan introduces a shot of Monterey coastline; a huge phallus of a rock rises menacingly out of the sea. The mood is set. Freudian symbols and overtones dominate throughout. In one scene Cal, after a rebuke by his father, climbs up into their newly-acquired ice plant where brother Aaron and girl friend are busy cooing to each other. For a moment Cal watches them through slits in the translucent green (envy) ice. "You'll make a wonderful mother, Abra" says the angelic Aaron, while Cal works off his own frustration by some erotic-looking behaviour with an ice-pick.

Dramatically, tension builds up throughout the film. Always the pace is forced on by the vengeful, brooding, Cal. Kazan's direction of James Dean as the unloved son is flawless. Much nonsense has been written about Dean, but certainly he was ideally cast as Cal. Physically his stature had the characteristics of youth, while his sensitive features were capable of expressing so eloquently all the torments and frustrations, and joys and excitements of adolescence. Parallels with fellow student Brando are worth little. True, both have something of a magnetic film personality, but whereas Brando's physique suggests power, Dean's Cal is a sensitive study of disturbed adolescence. Contrasting with his tantrums and furies is the soft-spoken Abra (played sensitively by Julie Harris), the righteous father, and sweet-toothed brother. Literally a shock tactic in himself Dean brings alive a violent character swayed by diverse emotions and compulsive psychic drives.

But we are not expected to identify ourselves completely with Cal's predicament. Always the camera acts as our observer. We follow him down the womb-like corridor to his mother's room; we're with him as he hitches a lonely lift on top of a goods train; but we are never more than highly sympathetic observers. We do not suffer with him. When Cal's birthday surprise for his father misfires and he runs out to cry in the shelter of a willow tree, the camera does not follow him. From outside we can see the loathing in Aaron's face as Abra comforts Cal, and then the deliberate vengeance when Aaron is taken to meet their mother.

In many ways *East of Eden* was a pioneer film. It was here that Kazan first used CinemaScope and demonstrated how effectively the medium could be employed in a feature of this kind. In addition it must be considered as something of a style-setter—in the next few years came any number of features on the "mixed-up" adolescent theme.

But in any case, the "n" number of requests which brought back *East of Eden* were worthwhile, if only for a second chance to assess the merit of "the unforgettable" James Dean.

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When Gilmore Roberts was attached to the Heatherly School of Art he was interested in film making and introduced it into his courses until at last, it became a separate branch of study there. Since then the film department has moved several times and changed leadership so that now, there is the independent London School of Film Technique with Maurice Stanton, the Principal. Also behind it are some of the earlier pupils: Dai Vaughan, David Naden, Arnold Wesker. Other names are Lindsay Anderson, Bob Dunbar, Jack Clayton, John Pipkin, Arthur Graham and Peter Henessey. Some like Bob Dunbar, are men with first hand experience of the cinema industry, others are more theoreticians. Whatever their background, and whatever the other committments of some of them, they all give some practical help to the School.

THE PROGRAMME

Apart from a purely technical course of two weeks in industrial film making, for advertising agencies etc., the main programme lasts for three terms and the cost is £95.

For working purposes the students are split into groups of twelve. As the School and, therefore, the intake is small, there are never more than two concurrent groups.

The first two weeks consist of hard training: lectures and the analysis of films, the theory and practice of a camera handling and the study of stock exposure lenses. These are basic exercises. Then comes the actual practice shot — usually poor — but of some value, for it involves the interpretation of the shot both through the medium of the subject itself and the camera interpretation, and it also demonstrates to the students just how wide the range of the senses must be in filming.

The School is aiming to cover all angles of film-making and the next exercise is scripting. The prose to be good must be capable of being visualised immediately. Everyone chooses his own subject — Brixton market can provide any variety of situation and character — but it is the group which breaks it into shots and discusses it as it will eventually be: a complete film. While one half of the group is busy shooting, the other will be working on set construction etc.

Sometimes the students themselves act, but as the Italia Conti Stage School is also in Brixton, it is to a mutual advantage when the students from this school act in these film briefs.

Each student is allowed so many feet of 16 mm. and 35 mm. film and if, in the preliminary stages, the film looks as if it will be good, then the student will be allocated more than his 300 ft. of 35 mm. film.

In four years, and out of approximately 150 films, fifteen have been outstanding, notably one shown at Amsterdam, which focused the "Troubadour" Coffee Bar in Earl's Court Road. Dark and smoky and with a jazz cellar, it lent itself admirably to student interpretation.

As for the students, some have gone in for continuity work, others are lighting technicians and cameramen; one has become an asistant editor, another is an editor of documentaries, and the School has produced one television editor. This may not seem impressive, but is as well to remember that the School is still young, and that the "big" jobs are never "landed" immediately, whatever the sphere; in a few years time it might be possible to see the students higher on the film ladder.

The results of the School are not without promise, yet any visitor is aware of a malaise; this is no imaginary undercurrent, as those connected with the LSFT do admit. It is difficult to see why this should be so, because it is fulfilling some purpose: as early as 1917 it was publicly expressed that there ought to be a film school in this country; the course is basically sound, sufficiently combining practice with theory; the staff is not only able but comprises strong film personalities and the students are keen.

FINANCE

Financial reasons are one of the roots. The students fees just cover expenses, but there are no reserves and insecurity leaves its own trade mark. (Even when I was there it was a very real doubt that the School might not be in existence by the time this issue is out.)

The L.C.C. could be a source of income, but they refuse to recognise the School. The vast resources of the film industry could also solve this problem, but again there is none of the necessary recognition. The impression is that the industry as such sees no need for this type of training ground. A recent "Observer" article on careers showed very palpably that the men at the top are unconcerned about newcomers making the grade. The answer to, "How do I get in?", says the "Observer" is "usually pretty dusty". The attitude of the industry is more than that of non-recognition, it is something far more akin to distrust, and for no apparent reason. "Definition" — an organ of committed film criticism — is wholeheartedly backed by the LSFT, and its attitude that the cinema is a means of personal expression permeates the course there. It follows that there is no love lost between the two organisations.

But this is a surface irritant that could be borne by a healthy body. More important is the unrest and disquiet in the School.

It is felt that the standard of applicants is generally insufficiently high. There is the customary G.C.E. standard, but this does not afford protection from unsuitable

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

ALLEN EYLES in Knightsbridge

Enthusiasm and Method may add up to Success

IT'S NOT so easy to find, nor exactly impressive from the outside but once you're there you can't help being impressed by the Stanislavsky Studio.

In the low-ceilinged, discreetly lit, tastefully decorated Knightsbridge basement where the teachings of Stanislavsky (his picture reverently framed on the wall) have been disseminated during the last three years, we talked to one of the directors, George Martin, about Method as it is usually depicted—acting "trees, typewriters, fried eggs"—and what it really is: essentially "the personal development of the individual".

We also discovered plans for a film venture that promises to be almost revolutionary.

Method doesn't produce slouchy, starving Beatniks. The popular picture of Method as bunk has partly come about due to the emphasis placed by Lee Strasberg in the New York Studio on just two aspects of Stanislavsky's teaching, improvisation and emotional recall, which George Martin uses to a lesser degree. Of the first, he does not consider even the "Shadows" approach of much use as an end of itself. (The second, emotional recall, is the recollection of striking events that the memory retains in vivid detail, perhaps from earliest childhood.)

The British system, inducing discipline, poise and confidence, plus the ability to concentrate, is not only of use in all the acting mediums but to writers and businessmen who regularly attend.

LOW COST

The school takes on groups of 25 for 10-week periods: the low cost of £20 for the course is made possible by private subsidies, and should clearly not handicap anyone sincere about doing it. The student attends two four-hour sessions on weekday evenings: with new confidence and fuller development and comprehension of himself, the actor can extend the range of roles that he can capably play—up to a point. Since the essence of Method acting is to play naturally from inside one's self, no actor can take just any role, and Shakespeare, Shaw and much of comedy do not lend themselves readily to this approach. Traditionally, actors play to the audience, but Method has them play to each other, generating such intensity that it holds the spectator spellbound. A mixture of styles is dangerous, though. In the film of "Julius Caesar" one has only to think of Brando's sore-thumb Mark Antony.

George Martin is 35-years-old, of Russian origin, and arrived here from China via Sweden a few years back, electing London rather than Hollywood as the home for his school, co-run with Anna Darl. There hasn't been time yet, he said, for the Studio to pay dividends; it took actors like Paul Newman and Rod Steiger many more years than the British Studio has so far existed to make their names and that of the New York centre.

But before too long the Stanislavsky methods, with due emphasis on all 28 concepts of the Method canon, may vindicate themselves in a flash. A full-length feature film, to be produced and directed in colour and Cinemascope by George Martin, should take the floor in 12 months time.

Using unknown Method students for the four leads, its theme will be that there are few moments in life when even partners in marriage can truly understand each other and not misinterpret the thoughts, gestures and words of the other . . . only a few seconds, perhaps a few days of communication between people. The title has just been registered, taken from the Bible, Job 28, where it asks "When then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?". "The Place of Understanding" will be set in Stockholm and London, and will tell of two marriages over a period of years.

THOROUGH PREPARATION

We were shown indications of thorough preparation: model sets which could be held against a light and moved around to show the different lighting effects possible, numerous sketch-paintings of other sets, the story treatment (the script in novel form) and so on. Sets of photographs carefully prepared to indicate the range of a particular actress were also indicative of enthusiasm combined with a real thoroughness of approach and promotion that perhaps the London School of Film Technique, for all the initial expense and bother, would be better advised to take up.

For it is the Stanislavsky Studio that presents a more exciting future. It's nice to see the cinema being thought of as amenable to experiment on so bold a scale: we look forward to seeing "The Place of Understanding".

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EXHIBITION

FROM PAGE 16

only five years ago and without compare in South London; the Odeon completely built as recently as 1954-5) and others like the Odeon Kingswood Bristol, a magnificent theatre indeed, to redevelop them as bowling alleys, it suggests that Rank's concern for the cinema's future leaves something to be desired. ABC's efforts to keep cinemas open have always been more extensive, and few closures have been other than obviously redundant properties.

Admittedly, Rank in forging one circuit out of two, has more cinemas to dispose of, even if rigid programming practices have swollen the total. A few key theatres have been ambitiously modernised, a couple have been recently built in new towns, but too many disappear without trace into dance-halls, Bingo emporiums, garages, TV studios and the like, if not sold to outside interests.

Part of the stalls area of the huge State Kilburn has become a dance-hall; one could wish to see more architectural ingenuity of this sort being applied to reduce cinemas to more economic proportions . . . perhaps by extending balconies forward to the screen, leaving most of the stalls free. Or, alternatively, redevelopment allowing the inclusion of basement cinemas (as Rank are doing at the Gaumont Haymarket site) with costs minimised would be a solution: and this would be particularly attractive if they could be operated, at least, experimentally, as art-cinemas.

New cinemas have, and are, being built. ABC have added to their circuit at Aberdeen, Preston, Maidstone, and most recently Sheffield; odd cinemas like the Drake Plymouth and London's Columbia have appeared; but only one new art-cinema has been built to our knowledge, the Kensington Paris-Pullman.

It seems clear that companies at present operating art-cinemas lack the resources to build new ones, and in any case find conversions cheaper. Local councils and outside bodies have little cause to see cinema as something worth preserving (although Beaconsfield provide a rare example of a local authority running a once closed cinema conventionally), yet when so many civic theatres are being planned or built with the risk of becoming costly white elephants, we would like to see them used—perhaps on alternate weeks—as art-cinemas to serve just as real a cultural need. However, an approach is being made to a council to provide "four walls" in a fashionable London suburb for a commercially operated cinema, and this if successful could be imitated elsewhere. The whole picture would be brightened if only the British Film Institute, which commands real respect, could extend into the provinces, perhaps using the above methods to set up regional NFTs. At least the BFI hope to mount short seasons of Archive films in two towns with the help of universities and local cinemas next year.

AND THE PAST

To be a real art-form, the cinema needs to keep its past achievements visible. The old films are too often gone forever, or permeate to the inadequate resting place of TV; it takes time and space to store them for an occasional Classic screening, but it's worth it. Films are beginning to be regarded more as long-term investments. "Genevieve", "The King and I", "The Seven Samurai"; all show continuing box-office power. Hitchcock's "Strangers on a Train" even held up on a complete circuit re-release, and "East of Eden" looks like following it.

More films at all levels should be reissued for the renewed attention of critics and public alike. With less and less product, and cinemas more inclined to resist producers' pressures to show their latest disasters for the little money they can coin despite public apathy, the future looks bright in this respect. It may even make old films more profitable **off** television.

These new concepts are being forced on the trade. Time, however, reduces effectiveness and extent. Where enthusiasm and appreciation exist in cinema, where the public are cautiously trusted rather than assaulted for their money, success can occur.

Louis Sher of Columbus, Ohio, went into cinemas in 1954 from the restaurant business without previous experience. Leasing a number of closed or unprofitable sites, he ran them the way he thought he would like to see cinemas run. This success story lead up to the largest and only regional art-cinema chain in the U.S., that of the Art Theatre Guild. The 16 of them limit admission to over 18s, show a feature and shorts twice daily (three times at weekends; just like the NFT), sell magazines including "Punch", replace popcorn and soft-drink sales with **free** coffee (and sometimes free lemonade) and shows pictures ranging from "Carry On Nurse" through "Never on Sunday" to the Bergman pictures, many of which are revived in special Sunday-afternoon series at certain theatres. Indicative of Mr. Sher's interest is ATG's recent sponsoring of a symposium of art-house owners and distributors of analyse and assess the potential of the market; indicative of his business acumen is the fact that only one of his theatres is a "problem".

Of course it could happen here. As Mr. Sher explained to "MOTION": "Probably the key to our continual growth has been the interest that we in the Art Theatre Guild have in the movies. With us it is not only a vocation but also an advocation. Our managers may have been newspaper men, publicity men, restaurant operators, biologists, mail clerks, but we have all had that common bond—**we like the movies.**"

"The Connection"

FROM PAGE 23

possible, particularly by leaving in these passages that any ordinary documentary would edit out.

It would work if the film were shot by amateurs in exactly the way claimed and depicted, using real "junkies" and a real "pad", actual conversation . . . and so on. Actually, the film's quality (lighting, definition, sound) apart from the deliberate defects suggests a full professional unit. Add to that some bad acting (which suggests a script) and the over-insistent voice of the hidden cameraman, J.J., and one is not surprised when the final roll of credits lay bare the whole deceit.

It is the phoniest, most objectionable kind of realism to fake a film and tell us we can't judge it in the normal way because it's indisputably true; they are only entitled to invite us to accept a dramatisation.

In any case, the approach would almost inevitably mean a dull film, which "The Connection" is. Dramatically, a more vivid impression lingers of "The Man with the Golden Arm" or "Stakeout on Dope Street" than "The Connection" will provide. **Allen Eyles**

LSFT FROM PAGE 36

applicants. A student there did suggest that all the students should have had some filming experience. But this would be a severe restriction on many who have already spent several years in some other training. Also it seems a little like putting the cart before the horse if the object of the School is to train people to enter filming. The question as to what are the criteria of the would be film-maker we could not solve, although there was the negative remark that far too many people were concerned with making films than there were real film-makers.

Another criticism is that there is too much selfishness or perhaps disinterestedness — especially in the team work and that this frequently prevents the finished product from being a complete success.

This is linked with the final complaint of too much amateurism. The students are admittedly trainees, but for a career; making films is supposed to be what they they are not making films for a hobby, they are training want to do more than anything else.

One hopes that the LSFT will pull through these troubles. The situation is not happy, but one cannot help but feel that the industry could do so much to help, both financially, and also by giving the students a goal — always necessary — to aim at. With such a boost there would be no doubt about the School's continuing existence. As it is the body might fail, but the idea certainly will not; the filming impetus is strong and still young, and somewhere another film school will turn up.

But why waste the time and effort by starting at scratch again, when the teething stage has already been passed here? We need more film schools — and this is where the Universities should be stepping in — but we also want to keep this one: it is worth keeping.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Compton Films Ltd ("Paris Playgirls"). Contemporary Films ("The Connection"). Gala Film Distributors ("Mein Kampf"). Intercontinental ("Lovers and Lollipops"). Jonas Mekas ("Shadows", "Pull my Daisy"). Mondial Films Inter-Distribution ("The Crossing of the Rhine"). Paramount ("One-Eyed Jacks"). Polish Institute (Photo on page 17). Twentieth-Century Fox ("The Ox-Bow Incident"). United Artists ("Bachelor Party", "Pork Chop Hill"). Warner-Pathe ("Rio Bravo", "East of Eden"). Publications Department of the BFI. The Federation of Film Societies.

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NY FILM BULLETIN

AMERICA'S SPOKESMAN FOR THE "NEW CRITICISM"

NYFB, which was started (and still functions) as a service publication for the New York area, listing the multitudinous, often unannounced, screenings and film events, has, with its radical reviews and features, translated reprints from **CAHIERS DU CINEMA** and sometimes acid comments on the film scene, come to be regarded by many (including its editors) as the U.S. outlet for the new critical viewpoint which started in France and so quickly and controversially has taken root in England.

Recent articles have included: **HITCHCOCK AND HIS PUBLIC, THE WORLD OF HAWKS, AN INTERVIEW WITH ANTONIONI** (including a **complete** and annotated filmography), **THE ART OF STANLEY DONEN** and a listing and analysis of **CAHIERS DU CINEMA'S** "Best Films of the Year" selections: 1955—60. Six Months (13 issues): $3.00. One Year (26 issues) $5.00. Sample Copy: 5 c.

NY FILM BULLETIN

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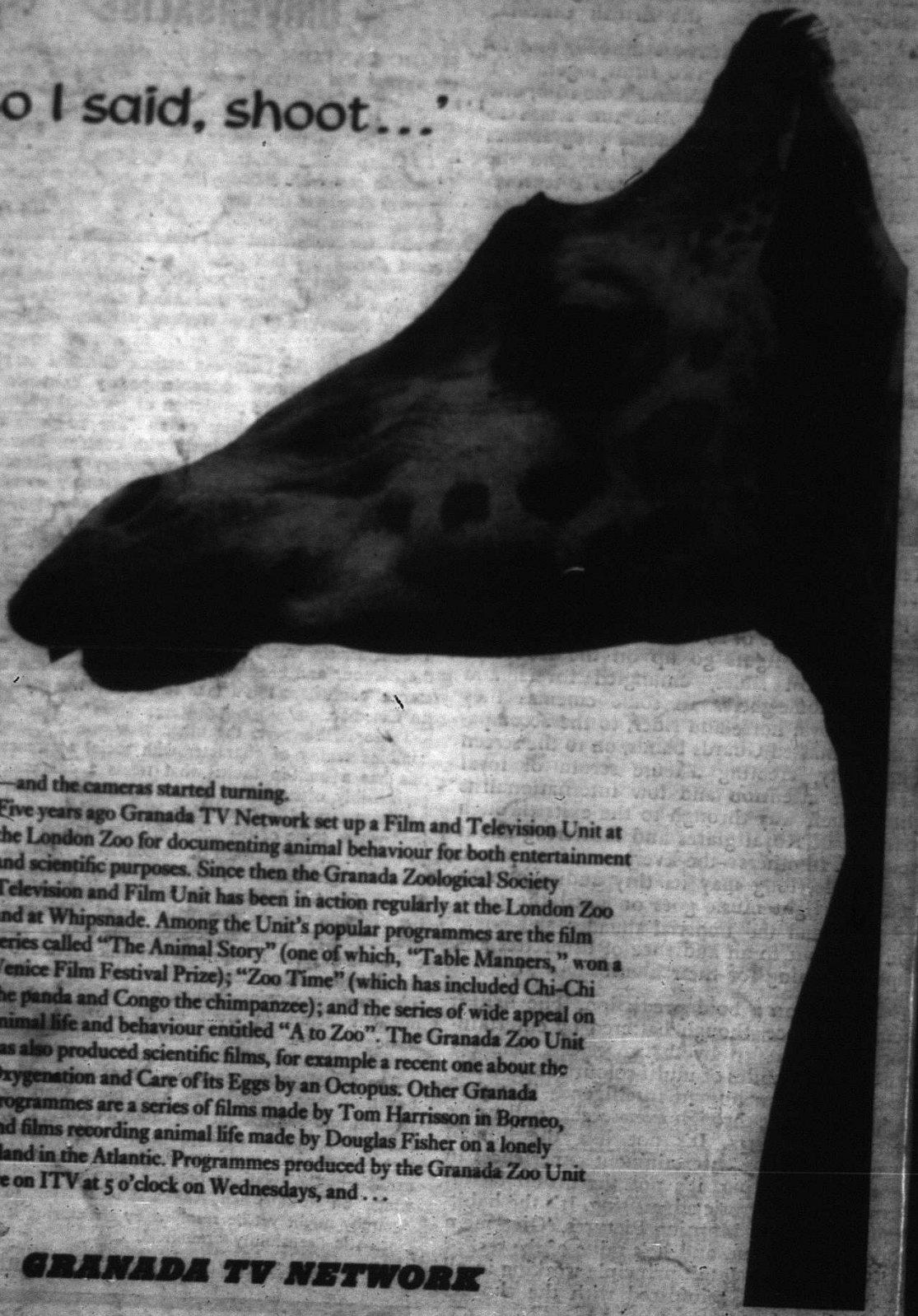
A CINEMA HOUSE PUBLICATION

'so I said, shoot...'



—and the cameras started turning.

Five years ago Granada TV Network set up a Film and Television Unit at the London Zoo for documenting animal behaviour for both entertainment and scientific purposes. Since then the Granada Zoological Society Television and Film Unit has been in action regularly at the London Zoo and at Whipsnade. Among the Unit's popular programmes are the film series called "The Animal Story" (one of which, "Table Manners," won a Venice Film Festival Prize); "Zoo Time" (which has included Chi-Chi the panda and Congo the chimpanzee); and the series of wide appeal on animal life and behaviour entitled "A to Zoo". The Granada Zoo Unit has also produced scientific films, for example a recent one about the Oxygenation and Care of its Eggs by an Octopus. Other Granada programmes are a series of films made by Tom Harrisson in Borneo, and films recording animal life made by Douglas Fisher on a lonely island in the Atlantic. Programmes produced by the Granada Zoo Unit are on ITV at 5 o'clock on Wednesdays, and . . .

GRANADA TV NETWORK